DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 131 836 CS 003 037

TITLE	Reading in the Secondary School.
INSTITUTION	Centre for Information on the Teaching of English, Edinburgh (Scotland).
PUB DATE	76
NOTE	70p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Centre for Information on the Teaching of English, Moray House College of Education, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, Scotland EH8 8AQ ($2.00)
JOURNAL CIT	Teaching English; v10 n1 Entire Issue Autumn 1976
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Book Reviews; *Language Arts; Periodicals; *Reading; *Reading Instruction; Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

The topic of discussion of this issue of the journal "Teaching English" is reading instruction in the secondary school. Articles include "Reading in the Primary School" (Alastair Hendry), "Patterns of Progress" (Fergus McBride), "Teaching Reading--Whose Business?" (James Maxwell), "A Reading Policy for the Secondary School" (Iain McGillivray), "Encouraging Effective Reading" (Colin Harrison), "The Underachieving Child in the English Class" (Howel Jones), "The Open University Reading Development Courses" (John Hay Scott), "A First Year Class Library" (George Arthur), and "James Inglis--Teacher" (Sydney B. Smyth). Also contained are poems by John Blackburn and Philip Drew, as well as reviews of books concerning the following: learning through talk, Scottish writing, poetry anthologies, stories on tape, drama and discussion, language and creative writing, reluctant readers, the primary levels, serious play, and language. (RS)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

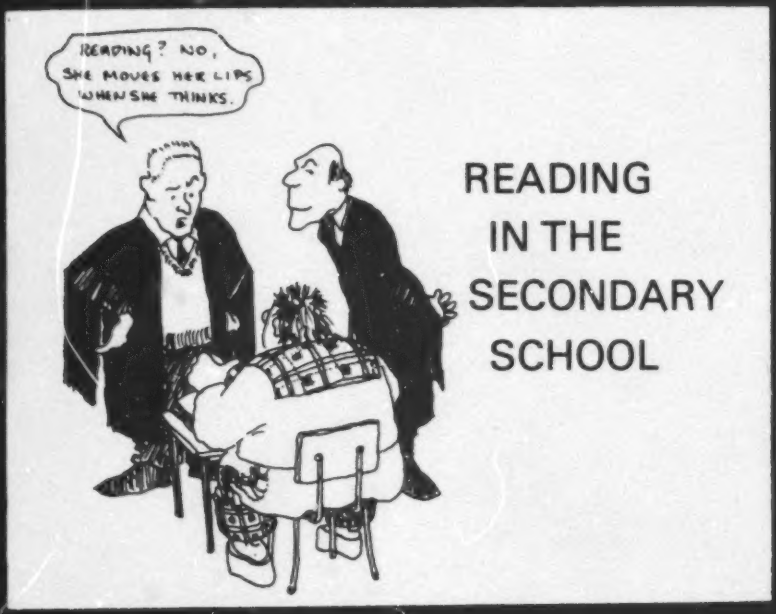
ED131436

Teaching English

The Journal of Teachers of English in Scotland

Vol. 10 No. 1 | A C.I.T.E. Publication | Autumn 1976

ISSN 0305-7755



READING IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

2

40p

CS 003 037

CENTRE FOR INFORMATION ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Moray House College of Education
Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ

Telephone 031-556 8455 Ext 225

CITE was established in September 1967 with the support of the Scottish Education Department.

CITE acts as the focal point for curriculum development and support in English teaching in Scotland.

It is in touch with local development groups throughout Scotland.

It is the executive arm of the Scottish Central Committee on English.

It gathers information on the teaching of English as a mother tongue from a wide range of sources.

CITE has a large library of books (including textbooks) of concern to teachers of English.

The library is open from 0845 hours to 1645 hours daily.

Special arrangements can be made for opening at other times.

Books may be borrowed by post.

CITE publishes *Teaching English* thrice yearly in October, January and May.

The Editor welcomes suggestions for features and comment on the magazine's content.

He invites articles, reviews, original poetry for possible publication.

Copy for the next issue should be submitted by 1st December 1976.

SYDNEY B. SMYTH, M.A.
Director

TEACHING ENGLISH

Vol. 10 **No. 1**

ALASTAIR HENDRY
Reading in the Primary School . 5

FERGUS MCBRIDE
Patterns of progress . . . 10

JAMES MAXWELL
Teaching Reading—Whose Business? 12

IAIN MCGILLIVRAY
A Reading Policy for the Secondary School 14

COLIN HARRISON
Encouraging Effective Reading . 19

HOWEL JONES
The Underachieving Child in the English Class 25

JOHN HAY SCOTT
The Open University Reading Development Course . . . 28

GEORGE ARTHUR
A First Year Class Library . . 30

S.B.S.
James Inglis—Teacher . . . 35

NOTES AND NEWS 39

POEMS
John Blackburn 18
Philip Drew 24

REVIEW
Learning through Talk . . . 43
Scottish Writing 45
Poetry Anthologies . . . 48
Stories on Tape 49
Drama and Discussion . . . 52
Language and Creative Writing . 59
Reluctant Readers 61
Primary 63
Criticism for C.S.Y.S. . . . 65
Serious Play 67
The Space Between Words . . 68

Illustrations by Callum Campbell, English Department, Craigroyston Secondary, Edinburgh.

Price in U.K.: 40p per issue. £1.20 per volume (incl. postage). Overseas: $2.00 per issue, $6.00 per year, or equivalent in sterling.

Cheques and Money Orders should be made out to Moray House College of Education.

Reading

In this issue we are concerned with the teaching of reading in the Secondary School. It is perhaps only recently that it has become possible to think of reading teaching as being a responsibility of the secondary school. Too often reading has been "thought of as an uncomplicated skill like walking, acquired when young then left to look after itself." [1] Even now, nearly two years after Bullock, "reading teaching" is sometimes considered as being only for those who are retarded in some way, and can be safely passed over to the remedial department.

Neither attitude does justice to the problem. (And a *problem* it is, not a crisis as some would have us believe).

Fergus McBride's article sets out one aspect of it. He shows that the "average" secondary pupil is improving in reading at only half the rate of the "average" primary pupil, and that the poorer the pupil is, the poorer is his gain in secondary school. This "fanning" effect was noted also by Bullock, and, considering the information available on the social background of slower learners, confirms Bullock's observation that "there may now be a growing proportion of poor readers among the children of unskilled and semi-skilled workers." The social consequences of such a trend hardly need to be spelt out.

James Maxwell's article sets out a second aspect. There may be important areas of reading being neglected in secondary schools because no-one feels himself responsible for them. The English teacher teaches the kind of reading that suits his own purpose—but other teachers rarely teach the reading skills appropriate to their own subjects. It is not, after all, their business, or so they believe. Michael Marland, speaking to Ayrshire teachers at a recent conference (reported in Notes and News) gave some illuminating examples of the tendency of some Mathematics teachers deliberately to *avoid* teaching the reading skill needed to deal with mathematical problems. The research associated with the Schools Council Project on Effective Reading [2] shows that there is less reading associated with subjects other than English than one

[1] *A Language for Life*, 2.30.

[2] The full report is not yet published.

might expect. Both the teaching *and* the experience of important kinds of reading may be lacking.

A third aspect of the problem is referred to by several of our authors: the demands made on reading ability by the complex nature of our social organisation have increased and continue to increase. The "post print" era heralded by Marshall McLuhan and his disciples obstinately refuses to arrive. That bit of the global village, indeed, recedes further and further into the future. It is not just that "Opinion" in *The Sun* or "Record View" in the *Daily Record* will be difficult for a ROSLA class to follow (*The Sun* may set; the *Record* may break); it is that large numbers of people cannot read the documents they need to get their very social rights. Donald Moyle, speaking to the National In-service Course on English for Slower Learners in June, instanced "one of our simplest government forms . . . on how to claim for family allowance. The little pamphlet on this has a reading level of around fourteen, which jumps, however, in the section that tells you how to fill in the form, to seventeen." Moyle also pointed out that the "normal householder in Britain fills in up to seventeen times as many forms per year that he did in 1939." Similarly Bullock quotes American experience to suggest that "the lowest grade of difficulty at which complex subject matter can be written approximates to a reading age of about 15."

These are thoroughly practical considerations, quite obviously immediate and pressing. Ultimately much more important to the quality of the life of our society and of the individual in it is the degree to which all can enter into the discussion of how we should direct our lives as social beings and as individuals. Social, political, ethical decisions are (not just "ought to be" but *are*) everybody's business. What is the minimum "reading age" needed for that?

The problem, briefly stated, is not to "maintain standards." The problem is how to raise standards.

To do this we need to think of whole school policies and Iain McGillivray's article points out ways in which we might go, and how English teaching might fit in to such a policy. We need to become more resourceful in our techniques of teaching reading; Colin Harrison's article makes suggestions for working with pupils that will enable them to "interrogate the text" in ways hardly even experimented with here in Scotland. We need to continue to educate ourselves in every aspect of reading teaching, and John Scott reports on the value of his experience as an Open University "Reading Development" student. We need to expand our knowledge of the growing number of books available for younger readers and George Arthur provides a basic class library list for a mixed ability S1.

And, of course, we need to be aware of the needs of slower learners. This is the subject of the article by Howel Jones. Not only does he set out the problem in a dramatic fashion, but he provides a clear procedure for identifying those children in need of special help.

We go to press just as the Prime Minister is doing the education service the compliment of devoting to it a major speech. We all have much to learn from it, and it directs our attention to the continuing importance of "basic literacy." It is necessary, however, to remember that Mr Callaghan speaks from the context of England, and some of what he says does not bear on the Scottish situation. He gives voice, for instance, to public concern about "progressive" or "informal" teaching methods in primary schools. Whatever the relevance of that concern to England, it has to be said that in Scotland reading has been taught "formally," carefully and successfully by our primary teachers. All the hard, closely researched evidence available makes it clear that "illiteracy" is *not* a problem in Scottish primary schools.

Mr Hendry's article, which reviews current practice, should assure us that, if there are things to complain of in the work of our primary schools, the teaching of reading is not one of them.

Secondary teachers are given a good base to work from by their primary colleagues. We hope that the suggestions in this issue may help to maintain the good work of our schools.

Reading in the Primary School

ALASTAIR HENDRY
Craigie College of Education

In view of the variety of reading practices exhibited in recent national surveys (SCOLA, 1975, Riddell and Gulland, 1975, Maxwell, 1976), the task of providing for secondary teachers in a short article, a reasonably coherent picture of what is being done in reading in primary schools is a somewhat formidable one. Nevertheless it may be of interest to see the range of activities which in recent years has been described in a number of primary schools where the teachers and head teachers, working with their Primary Advisers and Craigie Reading Centre tutors, have examined their current practices and have begun to develop for their schools an appropriate policy for the teaching of reading from P1-7.

Basic Aims

In establishing basic aims for their reading programmes, the teachers generally agreed that they wanted their pupils (*a*) to learn to read fluently and with understanding, (*b*) to use reading effectively as a tool for further learning, and (*c*) to regard reading as a source of pleasure. These three aims were reflected in the reading programmes by areas of work, which an increasing number of writers (e.g. Bullock, 1975, Potts 1976) follow Harris (1961) and describe as developmental reading, functional reading and recreational reading. *Every* teacher is concerned with all three of these areas although the stages reached by her children make variation in emphasis inevitable and essential.

Developmental Reading

This includes all the activities which contribute to the teaching of what is often called the "mechanics" of reading or word recognition and thus to the development of fluency and comprehension.

In the first place, these activities build up a number of words ("look and say" words or *"sight vocabulary"*) which the child can recognise immediately he encounters them. Here the teacher of younger children introduces the names of objects, places, people already known to the child and uses the child's own language as he recounts and records (or has recorded for him) his varied experiences. This vocabulary growth is further stimulated by the language experience provided by the teacher herself through the telling or reading of stories and the using of the early reading materials. The more recently published reading schemes (e.g. Sparks, Dominoes, Link Up, Breakthrough etc.) all try to ensure that the incidents described and the vocabulary used are familiar to the child.

. . . variation in emphasis . . .

Secondly infants teachers in order to help their pupils identify unfamiliar words, devote considerable amounts of time to *phonic analysis*, from the simplest letter-sound relationships to the more difficult letter groupings. The approach to phonics is usually rendered systematic where the teachers follow the suggestions of the authors of the reading schemes or have developed their own phonics programme for their schools. Later in the primary school this work branches out into spelling activities and word study.

A small but growing number of teachers at all stages of the primary school, as a result mainly of the Open University Reading Development Courses, are beginning to concentrate more on activities to develop their pupils' *use of context cues.* In this they are capitalising on the children's existing language background as well as utilising more fully relevant texts to develop "the ability to anticipate or predict that certain letters, word classes, word forms, meanings or actual words are more or less likely in a given context" (Merritt, 1975).

Oral reading not only shows the child's ability to apply word recognition skills and to read from *left to right,* but as he begins to observe punctuation, phrasing, change of intonation, etc., to show also an understanding of the meaning of what he is reading. Reading round the class is still practised in some Upper Primary Classes but more often oral reading is reserved for the children's reports, poetry, plays etc. Reading aloud can also play an important part in the diagnosis of certain kinds of difficulties.

The activities outlined so far assist in the development of fluency but all of us at some time or other have read a chapter or passage through and then wondered what it was all about. "Reading is not reading without access to meaning" (Lefevre). Reading, in its fullest sense, implies comprehension.

The most common form of teaching *comprehension* in Scottish schools is for the teacher either to make up questions on a passage or story read by her pupils or to use the passages and questions provided by some of the well-known series of class readers or English course books. "Usually these exercises require no more than a re-statement of facts given in the text; seldom do they require any interpretation or evaluation of the ideas that are expressed in the text or any emotive or thoughtful reaction on the part of the reader to these ideas. They are as dull as they are ineffectual" (Roberts 1969). The reading laboratories (Science Research Associates) and workshops (Ward Lock Educational) offer a different and structured approach and are used extensively. For their product, S.R.A. claim, "The series aims to develop reading comprehension, to teach the meanings of words in context, to increase reading speed with comprehension, to improve listening comprehension, and to give practice and instruction in note-taking and reference skills, all leading to good study habits." (Catalogue 1975-6). There is a great deal of evidence (Hendry, 1973) to suggest that the reading laboratories can provide valuable assistance in the development of the specific skills, provided that they are used with the appropriate teacher involvement and not mainly as a means of "keeping them quiet," while the teacher does something else. The limitations of these materials must also be recognised. The constant diet of short passages corresponds little to real life reading. The questions set bear slight relation to reading purposes a child may encounter in topic work, a centre of interest or indeed in his everyday life. To ensure the greater effectiveness of the structured kits, the teacher must provide opportunities for the various skills to be transferred to and practised in the wider contexts, not only of centres of interest but of all the subject areas of the curriculum. No one emphasised the need for this "skill-using" more than Don Parker (1963) the originator of the S.R.A Reading Laboratories.

In recent years, increasing use has been made of the model devised by Barrett (Clymer, 1968) who proposed five types or levels of comprehension:

(*a*) *literal*: in which the reader is asked to recognise or recall details explicitly stated in the passage or story. A quick check of the questions asked in most class readers and course books will show that 100% of them in some cases are at a literal level. Over some series of books used from P4 to P7, the passages become more difficult but the type of comprehension demanded remains the same.

(*b*) *re-organisational*: in which the reader restates in his own words, summarises, makes notes or even expresses in the form of a diagram the content of a passage or story.

(*c*) *inferential*: here the reader uses ideas and information from the passage, relates them to his own personal experience in order to build a hypothesis. He may predict outcomes or infer motives. He may infer a person's character from clues in the situation presented or words spoken: e.g. What does the water-barrel episode tell us about Eustace Clarence Scrubb? (Lewis, 1965).

(*d*) *evaluative*: involves critical awareness. Ideas in a passage are compared with external criteria or with criteria provided from the reader's experience and values. Here he judges

between fact and fiction e.g. comparing the accounts of Custer's death in *Custer's Gold* (Ulyatt, 1975), *Custer's Last Stand* (Henry, 1966) and *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (Brown, 1972) or considering the life of the cowboy in *Boss of the Nimko Drive* (St Pierre, 1970), *The Longhorn Trail* (Ulyatt, 1974) and *The Log of a Cowboy* (Adams, 1969). Here too the reader judges reality or fantasy, tries to detect propaganda and searches for author bias etc.

(*e*) *appreciative*: in which the reader reacts to the passage, expresses his feelings e.g. boredom, interest, indicates sympathy for a character, etc. The delightful Charlotte (White, 1963) often produces strong reactions in children when, like Wilbur, they meet her for the first time!

This Barrett model provides a useful basis for the production of questions by the teacher and increases her awareness of the kinds of thinking being required in a particular situation. It is also clear that, as teachers devise questions and purposes on this basis, they realise all the more the kinds of contribution the reader's background of language, general knowledge etc. make to his understanding and how essential it is to select appropriate reading material.

Functional Reading

Learning to read is not an end in itself and the child, as he develops in fluency and comprehension, begins to use his new skills as a tool for learning. To assist him in his search for information his Primary teachers provide appropriate materials and opportunities *to locate information* on topics of interest and for specific purposes. At the start the teacher will guide the child by means of simple work cards which tell him what to look for and where to find it. Later, as his skills develop and as he needs them, he is taught *to use an index* and *table of contents* to simplify his search.

In recent years the volume of information books published has been very considerable. Fortunately the quality of production of many of these has been of a very high standard and teachers have been able to select books and materials according to criteria relevant to their children and the materials' intended use. The current economic constraints however have cut across this essential selection process.

Dictionary skills, essential to the location of items presented in alphabetical order, spring not from the introduction of "Your dictionary" in P4 but from the early work in sound-symbol relationships in P1. The initial work in sight vocabulary and phonics with its associated picture dictionaries leading to the grouping of items in alphabetical order lays the foundation for all later dictionary use. Sequence of skills development here is important and most easily learnt and consolidated, if unbroken. Some dictionary series make provision for this sequential approach e.g. Chambers' *Young Set Dictionaries* (Brown *et al*, 1971-73). In topic work, encyclopedias are used extensively in upper primary classes. Occasionally the P5 teacher in a school assumes that the P4 teacher has taught her pupils how to use an encyclopedia and the P4 teacher makes the same assumption about her P3 colleague. But very often the P3 teacher has not dealt with this at all, judging it too difficult for her class at that stage. It is situations like this that highlight the value of a coherent school policy on reading and frequent opportunities for communication among a staff.

Where schools have libraries and/or resource centres with *catalogues* or *index systems*, upper primary pupils can be taught how to use them and encouraged to discover the vast potential they contain.

In all of these activities across the curriculum they are involved in the practical application of comprehension at the various levels. At times, special subject matter demands guidance on *specific skills* e.g. reading a graph, map, chart or a telephone directory or railway timetable.

Skimming and *scanning* as yet receive little attention in Primary schools, except perhaps where relevant structured material is available. Many teachers have found the *Student Research Guide* to *Researchlab*. (S.R.A. 1974) helpful in beginning to plan work in functional reading.

Once the information has been found, the pupil may have to organise what he has read in some way. He may have to *summarise* the essential points or take notes. These techniques again require instruction and opportunities for development. Where this does not occur, the pupil copies the text word for word, exercising little discrimination. It must also be remembered that in some information books the facts are presented so succinctly

and with an economy of words that the task of summarising may be totally unrealistic.

Recreational Reading

The telling and reading of stories by teachers have in the past, been concentrated mainly in Infants classes. In Middle and Upper Primary, such activities were luxuries to be enjoyed on Friday afternoons after the week's work was over. Although there are still a number of teachers and head teachers who regard reading fiction as a frill and the time devoted to it in a school as wasted, the general trend is now towards its recognition as an integral part of any reading programme. As interest in reading has grown over the last ten years or so, publishers have responded with a "burgeoning richness" of literature for children in paperback and hard covers. More than at any time before, can the enthusiastic teacher encourage her children to share in her own love of books and so come to see the pleasure that can be derived from them. Her class library must contain a variety of books, representing a considerable range not only of reading levels but also of quality current favourites and other books she herself will wish to promote.

. . . select books involving situations . . . at times even disturbing

Fiction has value not only as a source of pleasure but also because it may extend the child's experience and knowledge of life. "Stories are not something a child grows out of (although he grows out of childish stories) but something he grows up through. They reveal human life to him in ways he can feel and understand, and according to their quality, develop his power of understanding human life" (Peel, 1967). Here again the onus lies on the teacher to select books involving situations and experiences not only pleasurable but at times even disturbing to which the children will respond and which may provide opportunities for meaningful discussion and either recreational or functional in character. An enjoyable story similarly can be used for the development of particular reading skills.

In primary school, the teaching of reading would appear to be most successful where exchange of opinions. Brison *et al.* (1972) have made a valuable contribution in suggesting ways in which some of this work may be carried out, while Cass (1967), Townsend (1976), and others have indicated the wealth of resources available. Only economic reasons can now be adduced for the existence of an impoverished use of fiction in the primary school.

Conclusion

I would stress that the three headings above have only been used as an expedient to group a variety of activities. The areas so presented are in no way isolated—in a "developmental" activity children may read material which is there is a coherent policy which ensures that every teacher knows how reading is being developed throughout the school and what kinds of contribution she is expected to make to the process. This also enables material to be selected for the children at each stage in accordance with the relevant criteria.

Where such a policy is being established or maintained, support for the schools is essential. This support comes from a variety of sources, such as local authority working groups, teachers' centres and Primary Advisers. Extensive use is made of the growing number of College Reading Centres. In Craigie, for example, four thousand teachers per year take advantage of the facilities provided.

Finally, the extent to which each child will have progressed within all or any of these aspects of reading will have depended on many factors. It is clear that the levels reached by the end of P7 will vary from child to child. The process however does not end with P7. Consolidation and extension must continue in secondary schools—and for this to be achieved adequate communication between the two sectors of the system is vital. In S1 there is no such thing as a "fresh start" in language development.

REFERENCES

Adams, Andy (1969). *The Log of a Cowboy*. New York, Airmont Publishing Co.

Brison, Ian; Cook, M.; Valentine, D. (1972). "Using Fiction in the Primary School," *Teaching English*, Volumes 5 and 6.

Brown, A. L.; Downing, J.; *and* Sceats, J. (1971-1973). *Young Set Dictionaries*. Edinburgh, Chambers.

Brown, Dee (1972). *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. London, Pan Books.

Bullock Report (1975). *A Language for Life*. H.M.S.O.

Cass, Joan E. (1967). *Literature and the Young Child*. London, Longman.

Clymer, Theodore (1968). "What is Reading? : Some Current Concepts," *in* A. Melnik *and* J. Merritt (*ed*). *Reading: Today and Tomorrow*. London, University of London Press.

Harris, Albert (1961). *How to Increase Reading Ability*. New York. David McKay Co., 4th Edn., pp. 12-14.

Hendry, T. A. (1973). "A Study of the Effectiveness of SRA Reading Laboratory IVa with College of Education Students." (Unpubl. M. Ed. Thesis, University of Glasgow).

Henry, Will (1966). *Custer's Last Stand*. New York, Grosset & Dunlap.

Lewis, C. S. (1965). *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Puffin Books.

Maxwell, James (1976). *The Teaching of Reading in Scottish Schools* (in Press).

Merritt, John (1975). "Reading: seven to eleven," *in Education:* 3-13, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 29. Glasgow, Collins.

Parker Don H. (1963). *Schooling for Individual Excellence*. New York, Nelson.

Peel, Marie (1967). *Seeing to the Heart*. London, Chatto & Windus, p. 56.

Potts, John (1976). *Beyond Initial Reading*. London. G. Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Roberts, Geoffrey R. (1969). *Reading in Primary Schools*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, p. 55.

Riddell, G. W. *and* Gulland, D. L. (1975). *Teaching: Active or Passive*. Edinburgh, Holmes McDougall.

St Pierre, Paul (1970). *Boss of the Namko Drive*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Puffin Books.

Scola Survey (1975). *A Survey of the Teaching of Language Arts in the Upper Stages of Scottish Primary Schools*. Ayr, Craigie College of Education.

Townsend, John R. (1976). *Written for Children*. 2nd edn. Harmondsworth, Penguin Pelican Books.

Ulyatt, Kenneth (1974). *The Longhorn Trail*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Puffin Books.

Ulyatt, Kenneth (1975). *Custer's Gold*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Puffin Books.

White, E. B. (1963). *Charlotte's Web*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Puffin Books.

The newspapers would want us to panic about our supposed lack of high standards in literacy. . . . But Britain's far bigger problem is that it's costing every working adult six pounds per week in taxes to pay the interest on money we've borrowed from abroad. About 50% of that money was borrowed from Saudi Arabia—where the population is 92% illiterate.

—DONALD MOYLE, *addressing the National Conference on English for the Slower Learner, June 1976.*

Patterns of Progress in Scottish Secondary Schools

FERGUS McBRIDE
Moray House College of Education

Perhaps the most obvious difference between primary and secondary schools is in their traditional organisational patterns. The class arrangements generally found in primary schools imply an integrated curriculum where the timetable is flexible and indistinct, whereas in the secondary school, subjects must be taught by a variety of teachers. As the pupil passes from the primary to the secondary stage, unity of curriculum in a situation supervised by a single teacher is replaced by diversity of studies carried out under a range of specialists. This shift should be accompanied by an increasing amount of study undertaken independently, since independent study must be one of the important aims of secondary education. Given that, it would be reasonable to predict that a pupil's progress in the various subjects will depend increasingly upon his ability to use the printed texts which are a necessary supplement to, if not an integrated part of, his courses. Assignments, designed to provide the pupil with an opportunity to consolidate and expand ideas introduced by the teacher, generally call for an ability to comprehend written texts.

How well do secondary school pupils use the printed medium so important for their progress?

We have come to recognise that there are large numbers of pupils who are so severely handicapped through lack of competence in reading that special departments have been set up to remedy the situation as far as possible. Clearly the existence of these extreme cases would give very strong grounds for assuming that there are large numbers of pupils just above this level of reading ability who have discomforting or disabling difficulties in using and enjoying printed language. The situation is as yet uncharted though we have many "travellers' tales" from teachers concerning pupils' inability to use text-books. Here might lie the reason for many pupils' loss of interest, unfavourable attitude or troublesome behaviour. Here, too, might lie the cause for teachers avoiding the use of texts, for "spoon feeding," for using assignment sheets in which the linguistic content is so low as to approach invisibility, with a consequent failure to train children in the use of the written language appropriate to the subject in question.

A Survey of Competence in Reading in Scottish Secondary Schools

Recently at Moray House College, a survey was carried out of the reading competence of 1827 pupils aged 13 years 0 months to 15 years 6 months in 87 secondary schools of various types throughout Scotland.

The sample chosen was particularly representative of all secondary pupils in that all schools in Scotland were classified according to the seven school types used in the *Staffing Survey of Secondary Schools* (H.M.S.O., 1970). A systematic sample was taken of approximately one school in five and a random sample of pupils within the age limits was made within each of these schools.

The test used was the Edinburgh Reading Test, Stage 3, which was recently standardised on 3000 Scottish primary pupils aged 10 years 0 months to 12 years 6 months. By using this test with the secondary pupils it was possible to make a direct comparison of the pupils' scores with those of the primary school pupils. Predictably the test was too easy for a small proportion of the best pupils in the secondary school sample, but this "ceiling" did not influence the statistics upon which the findings of the survey are based. A "ceiling" depresses the scores of those individual pupils who "go off the scale," and consequently any statistic based upon data which includes such scores would be invalidated. But the scores of pupils well below the "ceiling" are unaffected and consequently the percentiles (*i.e.* scores below which given percentages of scores lie) which were used in this study, are not influenced by the "ceiling."

The Edinburgh Reading Test, Stage 3, which lasts approximately one hour, is made up of five sections which sample a variety

of reading tasks similar to, or related to, the types of reading which the pupil is called upon to carry out in school. The overall score which is the most reliable measure (reliability of ERT is 0·97. Correlation with NFER Test DE is 0·90) was taken as the indicator of the pupils' level of reading ability.

The scores of the 1827 secondary pupils were compared with those of the 2865 pupils in primary schools who were used in the standardisation of the test.

The most striking contrast was the general decline in the rate of progress as measured by the increase in score on the test over a two and a half year period in each case. The gain of the average pupil ("average" pupil is here taken as the pupil at the 50th percentile) in primary schools was 1·47 points per month whilst that of the average secondary school pupil was 0.76 points per month—approximately half of the rate of the "average" primary school pupil. This slower rate of increase in score obtained throughout all the lower ability ranges. This slackening off in rate of progress of the poorer readers gives cause for concern for it is with them that the need for improvement is most urgent. It seems reasonable to suspect that these older and more mature pupils, faced with the more demanding reading tasks of the secondary school and more conscious of their need for skill in reading would at least maintain the rate of progress of the poorer readers at the primary stage.

The result of this falling off in rate of growth in reading is a piling up of pupils who are retarded in reading. In fact, 25% of the secondary pupils made scores less than average children three years younger.

A fundamental question is how adequately many of these pupils will meet the reading tasks they will have to face on leaving school. The current Adult Literacy Campaign indicates that many pupils leave school unable to cope with the simplest reading material and that many of these unfortunate people are in no way unteachable. There are probably many more school leavers who find difficulty in reading functionally and certainly never read *with* pleasure, let alone *for* pleasure.

A prediction from this survey is that 9 per cent of pupils in secondary schools will leave at age 16 able to read less well than the average ten-year-old. In the absence of any previous surveys in Scotland, we cannot say whether this would be an improvement or a deterioration in the situation but if we accept the results of a study cited by the Bullock Committee (*A Language for Life*, H.M.S.O., 1975, para 2.2) a reading age of 13 years 0 months is "a reasonable level of comprehension" for coping with the simplest daily newspaper.

A more immediate question is the extent to which pupils' lack of competence in reading handicaps the pupil in coping with the texts reated to his school courses. This survey gives data regarding the levels of competence of the pupils and the very marked differences between pupils' abilities, but we have little information as to how the pupils cope with the texts with which they are presented in school. One thing is certain—the great differences in reading ability found in this survey will mean that pupils, faced with the same materials, will achieve very different levels of success in benefitting from their reading experiences.

The extent to which pupils are successful in understanding school texts can only be ascertained by means of further surveys of the pupils and their texts in the various subjects and in a variety of typical reading situations, *e.g.* study reading, reference work and recreational reading. When information from such surveys is available we can attack systematically the problem of matching the difficulty of materials with the ability of the the pupil's competence in reading and the preparation of materials at appropriate levels of difficulty.

Teaching Reading in Secondary School —Whose Business?

JAMES MAXWELL
Director, Reading Research Unit, Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh

In 1977 an investigation into the teaching of reading in the upper primary and lower secondary school classes was set up, financed by S.S.R.C. and sponsored by S.E.D. A report on this inquiry is being prepared for publication. The matters discussed in this article arose from observations made during this inquiry, but the views expressed here are those of the writer only.

The reading activities of pupils in first and second year secondary classes fall broadly into three categories. There is what can be called literary reading, concerned mainly with narrative-descriptive material in novels, poems and plays, emphasising comprehension and interpretation and taught almost entirely

by teachers of English. There is the leisure reading of the pupils, selected by themselves and comprising a wide range of books, newspapers, comics and magazines, and often in volume of reading at least equivalent to the amount of reading done within the school. Finally, there is what can be called functional reading, that which is done within the school as part of the study of other subjects. Those investigated were Mathematics, Physical Sciences, History and Social Studies, Technical Subjects and Home Economics. The techniques of study and the reading skills involved are not necessarily the same, and a pupil who has just been reading *Kubla Khan* in an English class is unlikely to be heped by such reading when he moves on to the next class to study geometry, geography or technical subjects. The reading skills required for effective study are different. The other difference is that in the English class, the pupils would have had some guidance and instruction on how the poem should be read, but such guidance appears to be lacking in the other school subjects.

The assumption appeared to be that the English teacher should teach reading, and that what pupils learned in the English class should be sufficient for their reading in other subjects. The facts appear to be that English teachers teach the reading style required for their subject matter, basically a literary/comprehension/interpretation approach, and that teachers of other subjects do not take positive steps to teach the different reading styles required for effective study of their own disciplines.

To pursue the matter further, a list of commonly accepted reading styles was compiled from different sources and presented first to teachers of P6 and P7 classes. The list was as follows:

1. Rapid reading for gist;
2. Rapid reading for special information;
3. Rapid reading for relevant information;
4. Detailed reading to follow instructions;
5. Detailed reading to follow argument;
6. Reading for appreciation of style.

The primary teachers emphasised clearly that their main requirements were in styles 3

and 4, and least emphasis was clearly on styles 5 and 6. This does not necessarily imply that explicit teaching was given for the most required reading styles; indeed there is some reason to suspect that the balance of teacher approval was still given to careful and accurate reading, and rapid and selective reading, which is more liable to errors and omissions, was not actively encouraged.

In the secondary school, teachers of first and second year pupils varied considerably in the emphases of their reading demands on their pupils. English teachers required all reading styles almost equally, except for Reading to follow argument (5) which was less in demand. History followed a similar pattern, but the other subjects show a very clear cut demand for Reading to follow instructions (4) above all others. The resemblance between the pattern of English and History teachers' requirements and those of the primary school teachers is reasonably close, much closer than the resemblance between secondary English teachers and the other subjects, History excepted. Briefly, the great demand in the secondary classes is for Detailed reading to follow instructions (4), with Rapid reading for relevant information (3) and Detailed reading to follow argument (5) occupying a rather distant second place.

Of the secondary subject teachers, English (61%) and Technical, with minimal reading requirements (66%) are reasonably satisfied with the reading ability of their pupils. Of the other subject teachers, 50% or less are satisfied that their pupils' reading abilities in the various required styles are adequate. The picture is one of reasonable continuity between the teaching emphases and practices of primary teachers and teachers of English, but a substantial deficiency in the preparation for the kinds of reading and study required by other secondary school subjects.

It has been said that the school pupil is taught everything except how to learn. As appropriate reading skills are a major element in effective methods of study, the question is, whose business is it to remedy this deficiency in the teaching of functional reading. There is no obvious answer, but there are three possibilities. The responsibility could be that of each of the subject teachers, or of the teachers of English, or of a specialist teacher of reading. Which would create least difficulty?

The subject teachers are those who should know best what their needs are, but both in training and interests, very few consider themselves as competent in the teaching of reading. Though these teachers expressed themselves as dissatisfied with the reading abilities of their pupils, there were very few explicit requests for anything to be done about it. The main difficulty in developing the teaching of reading by the subject specialists is that there would be needed as many teachers as there are school subjects.

It seems to be more feasible to urge extension of the activities of the teachers of English. They already teach some aspects of reading, and all pupils attend their classes. The foundation is already there; the main point would be recognition by the teachers that much of the pupils' reading is functional reading, and giving approval to different styles of reading according to their appropriateness. Consultation with colleagues in other disciplines would be necessary, and some additional training for selected teachers of English in each school.

The other possibility would be an extension of the scope of the "Remedial" teachers. Again, the foundation is there, but covers a limited area. Remedial tends to be currently regarded as synonymous with backward, but it need not be so. It would be to the advantage of both pupils and teachers if the services of remedial specialists were available to pupils of above average ability as well as those below average, and to classes of pupils as well as to individuals. Remedial teachers also are probably less influenced by subject bias than teachers of English.

While one would hesitate to recommend the addition of still another category of specialist, namely a teacher of reading and study techniques, to the school staff, there is also the fact that at present there is no such animal in any case. There is a small but unacceptable amount of adult illiteracy, there are reported deficiencies in the reading skills of University and College students, and a recorded dissatisfaction by secondary teachers on the reading attainments of their pupils. This represents a deficiency in the school system which can be remedied, and though much remains to be done in the way of research and development in functional reading, the extension of function of existing practices seems most likely to produce some result. For this requirement the teacher of English is one promising candidate.

A Reading Policy for the Secondary School

IAIN McGILLIVRAY
Adviser in English, Renfrew Division, Strathclyde

Was it coincidence that the Bantu of Zaire were found to be both innocent of literacy and free from insanity? Maybe reading is more dangerous than we think. But whether or not madness lies at the end of the trail, our society demands that reading remains firmly part of the language development pursued in schools. And the 609 pages of *A Language for Life* suggest that our society isn't getting its money's worth. This article offers a few ways in which we might make reading at least a more systematic activity than it is at present.

If reading is just one aspect of language, as the Bullock Report dins into us, it cannot be taught as an isolated activity. The primary here has the advantage over the secondary school. In a pupil-centred curriculum, guided by a single teacher, reading is as likely to be taught through mathematics or environmental studies as through the reading scheme. But in the fragmented subject-centred secondary, reading is nobody's business except the English and remedial teachers. Nor is it easy in the multi-teacher secondary to establish the secure and close teacher-pupil relationship that is a prerequisite of good reading development. I am convinced that, unless subject proliferation is reversed and the secondary curriculum is unified, the individual pupil will remain lost to sight and his needs neglected. But while we work for the revolution, what can be done in the interim?

There are three possibilities:

(*a*) establish a post of reading specialist in each school;
(*b*) reorientate the English Department;
(*c*) make all subject departments aware of the demands they make on the language skills of their pupils.

The Bullock Committee stopped just short of recommending this first course, being concerned lest reading become detached from its matrix of language development as a whole. They saw as a sad warning the way the Reading specialists and the English specialists in the U.S.A. went their separate and uncommunicative ways. I think, however, there would be interesting results if reading workshops were established in secondary schools. These could operate quite tidily in any S1/2 curriculum if one period of each day for every class were allocated to supervised preparation or "homework." Those in need of help would at this point be withdrawn to a separate class where they would attack precisely the same preparation or homework, but would be given assistance with the reading difficulties met in these tasks. Reading tuition would then proceed quite properly in the context of the curriculum subjects. In the upper school it would be easy enough to include in the course options a reading support class where, again, help could be given firmly within the context of the curriculum. How all this would dovetail into remedial provision is a problem for individual schools. In some schools the remedial specialist already sits in with subject classes to identify the language difficulties presented by those subjects. It is not a big step from this to the reading workshop.

As for the English Department itself, the Committee recommended that at least one member of the department should have expertise in dealing with reading difficulties. It would seem reasonable, however, for the whole department to be clear about the primary, intermediate and higher reading skills, although they should remember, too, that a reader will have to deploy various levels of the hierarchy of skills simultaneously in any reading task.

Part 3 of *A Language for Life* should therefore be prescribed reading for all of us, and certainly its first 48 pages would be enlightening to any teacher in the secondary school. In particular, paragraph 8: 11 embarks on a

useful analysis of reading for learning under the headings:

i. the formulation of the purposes of reading
ii. organization for reading
iii. reading behaviour
iv. assessment of reading activities.

The expansion of the analysis is marked by its constant emphasis on the pupil being taught these activities but being ultimately responsible for them, so that it is he and not the teacher who assesses the success of his reading in the light of his stated purposes, his organisation and his strategies. This would seem again to be a timely emphasis on the individual.

To prevent the English staff from seeming a service industry, however, the third of the possibilities needs examination, that is, Reading across the curriculum.

As part of a policy of language across the curriculum a school should have a reading policy. First, this should draw attention to the reading difficulties of the texts in use. As a token that this is necessary, there follow a few quotations from S1 Mathematics textbooks.

"Here is a page from a milkman's book. The figures show the numbers of pints of milk he delivers each week in one road. It is of this that he keeps a record (no cost per pint is stated—rather use the current cost which ought to be displayed on a wall chart and kept up to date as prices change)."

"One of the most important ideas in mathematics is the idea of implication. It is the connection between two statements which says:

the second statement *follows from* the first

the first statement *implies* the second."

"Describe the set *characteristic*. The special quality which enables us to decide whether an object belongs to the set or not."

As well as levels of difficulty a reading policy would have to agree on such things as word recognition; it should be standard practice to syllabify on the board all new items of vocabulary, so that the image is securely linked to the sound. At the same time, the unfamiliar word should be related to the familiar: in the case of "implication," the teacher might refer to the prefix in/im along with the "ply" element in "plywood" and "three-ply wool."

A reading policy would also suggest the terms and concepts to be used by all teachers in talking about language — the word "syllable" itself, for example. For instead of talking about a hard piece of reading and seeking to construe it with the pupils, it is too easy to dodge the difficulty and paraphrase it. The last mathematical item, for instance, would provoke a forest of hands at the word "characteristic," to which the teacher should respond, not by explaining the word himself but by pointing out that the writer in fact goes on to explain the term. He would thus teach something of the backward and forward movement of reading.

Beyond the sentence lies the key sentence and the drift of a paragraph, which should be as much the concern of the chemist and historian as the English teacher. Of trans-curricular concern also is the need for pupils to make clear to themselves the purposes for any piece of reading. Certainly, until such a policy for reading is established, the hidden curriculum will, as Michael Marland said in a recent lecture, continue to support the tenets that print is difficult and that it is avoidable anyway.

So much for the responsibility of the whole school. What should the English teacher as subject specialist be bending his mind towards? What, to begin with, does he know of his feeder-primaries? The term "feeder-primaries" suggests a Moloch of a secondary and often not unjustly. Too often the primary child arrives on the secondary doorstep accompanied only by his V.R.Q. and reading age, and is taken in and done for. There is little regard for what has happened to him in his previous seven years.

Every English teacher should be interested in what the primary Language Arts course has offered his S1 pupils, at least in Primary 6 and 7. He should know what reading has taken place both in class and at home, and what has been done with that reading. Much useful to-ing and fro-ing is now taking place between primary and secondary teachers—in Renfrew the Erskine secondary and its primaries, for example, have set up a folder system so that

primary pupils can be accompanied by pieces of work in a selection of language activities—but we are still at the polite stage. Hard questions are still to be asked. What kind of records can a primary make available to a secondary? Can a reading profile be provided

. . . should know what reading has taken place . . . and what has been done with that reading

for each pupil? Is the system of informal reading inventories worth looking at? On the other hand the primary might well ask the secondary, what on earth do you do to our children? I have been in primary classrooms where the children are enjoying and deploying a wide range of reading, and responding thoughtfully and critically to the words on the page; the same children I have seen becoming desultory and inefficient readers in the secondary, performing well under their potential. May Barclay's work with primary classes in Ayrshire (*Teaching English*, Vol. 8, No. 3) ought to have given pause to many a C.S.Y.S. teacher.

The falling away of the reading of fiction in S1/2 has been well documented by *Children's Reading Interests*, Schools Council/Methuen. The decline is perhaps something to do with the way the secondary school organises its reading of fiction. Other than the class reader or the unit study novel, the main resource for fiction is the school library. Books are simply less easily got at than they were in the primary class library. To keep a child reading and to offer him development, the teacher must have certain conditions.

1. He must have a wide range of books immediately at his disposal. He can then more easily treat each child as client and suit the book to his needs, interests and reading level (tact, of course, remains necessary—it is too easy to become an earnest quack supplying specifics for every condition).
2. There should be multiple copies to allow a small group of pupils to discuss and perhaps work on the one title they all happened to be reading.
3. Readings from all the books, and in some cases whole books, should be put on cassettes and be at hand as starters and as crutches for the less able who can listen as they read.

All of these conditions could be met if class libraries were to be set up, beginning with S1/2. Each class would have five or six copies of each of some twenty-five or so titles. The expense would be about £250·00 for a school of around 1000. Since this is in effect a re-location of part of the school library function, some of the money could perhaps come from the library budget. Nevertheless, such a resource would offer much more flexibility, humanity and pleasure than two hundred copies of a single course book.

Admittedly a class library increases the burden of keeping up with what is going on in children's fiction, a burden that has to be shared; perhaps best is the Ayrshire system of joint panels of primary and secondary teachers who read and review each new arrival from the presses. On a departmental basis the current paperback lists can be filleted in little over a year's joint reading and discussion. Of course, the junior classics such as *Black Beauty, Little Women, Treasure Island* and *Prester John*, will happily co-exist with such gaudy company; they have a resilience and appeal which seems to have deserted their counterparts up the school.

As for the child who is ready for Kafka in S2, the senior fiction section of the school library should supply his needs, while the public library service will continue to feed the omnivorous and eclectic.

A corollary of such a system would be the phasing out of junior fiction from the school library, leaving space and time for research and reference activities.

To individualise reading further up the

school is less easy, since one has to elicit a more intensive and sustained response to a book. Even though the range of books therefore has to be more restricted to allow the teacher to cope, it need not shrink to the three or even two novels studied by most Higher candidates. There is much to be said for a more rapid treatment of a larger number of texts, so that, as well as having the benefit of hearing many more voices, the pupils can learn the techniques of explication and analysis by frequent practice. Again, small groups could be more often used. Class teaching still remains necessary for dealing with, say, the background to a novel or specific literary techniques, but only if the experience of a novel can be discussed in small groups, can individual responses be adequately formed and refined. (In this connection the reader might be interested to refer to the School Council's Writing Across the Curriculum paper, *From Information to Understanding*, which deals with non-fiction, rather than fiction). Of course, there is not time for a whole novel to be dealt with in this way, but if each of six groups were to take a separate aspect of the text and were to produce a paper on it, the class would end up with a reasonable guide to the text. Better a pupil take an active part in one-sixth of the guide, than contribute one answer to a class discussion which ends up as a note in his jotter, written by but not felt by him.

The dusty shelf lengths of classics would once more see daylight, if a modified version of the S1/2 class library were in operation further up the school. The Brontes and Jane Austen are certain to be accessible and enjoyable to fives and sixes of our senior pupils, as are Dickens and Hardy, Conrad and Wells. To support this revival flexible teaching arrangements and class groupings could bring together, say, the one Dickens expert on the staff, and the two or three small groups of enthusiasts drawn from various classes.

We must remember that, even at these upper levels, our pupils will read quite unlikely or demanding books provided that they are made ready for their reading. Reading-readiness has to be fashioned in all our readers. Schools who achieved this fequently use non-fiction as a judicious scene-setter for the work of fiction.

At this point it is worth heeding the S.C.E. Examiners' recurrent plaint that their candidates have little experience of, and less training in, the reading of expository or discursive prose. It is usually past papers themselves that incestuously engender what expertise the candidates seem to possess. What else is there? With luck we may have a few copies of *Intelligent Reading* surviving on our shelves or even *Prose of Purpose*, but generally, with the demise of Sir Roger and the passing of Clive of India and *Modern Essays of Our Time*, there's little left save the odd biography. Granted that one or two anthologies have recently offered aternatives on a thematic basis, but the extracts tend to remain divorced from the main business of English literature. There is a need to bind our prose more systematically into our curriculum.

This can be done in two ways. First, the prose can be used to contextualise the reading of fiction. So, for example, instead of an S1 group coming cold to *Harvey Kendall* in Topliners' *Westward With Their Wagons*, we could have the group first reading Kenneth Ulyatt's *The Day of the Cowboy* (Puffin) or *The Story of the Cowboy* (Ladybird). They would then have the common background which would stir their interest in the story and which would make their response to the story more shareable than had they been left to respond out of their own eclectic knowledge of cowboys.

If a fourth or fifth year group were to read *1984* after an incursion into selected transcripts from the Watergate tapes, the opinions of the British War Cabinet as to how our urban population would sustain an enemy bombardment in *Living Through the Blitz* (Harrison; Collins, 1975), their own school rules, the account of how the Foreign Office tried to stifle publication of *Animal Farm*, and Orwell's *The Language of Politics*, then their awareness of political manipulation would be the keener and their reaction to the novel the more critical. (Blackie's *Scrapbook* series is a useful source of extracts for this purpose). Although the prose extracts are not themselves the ultimate focus of the activity, they should still be scrutinised for the arguments, the attitudes and devices the writer uses for his purpose.

All this comes close to being a thematic study, but in fact differs in focus. The Thematic study tends to diffuse and divert the pupil's awareness of what he reads; some such vaguely sociological label as The Family in Conflict seduces us into parcelling up a number of independent and sharply but

variously focussed texts into a muzzy combine. To contextualise a work of fiction by a series of prose extracts is firmly to subordinate one to the other. The idea has been around a long time in the better educational editions which provide just this kind of apparatus for a novel such as *Hard Times*. But it is an idea worth using systematically from S1 onwards. Nothing we read should be without context.

Secondly, there is a case to be made for reading a full-length work of non-biographical non-fiction, as a book in its own right. The head of department might offer a core of texts as a class library for each of the senior classes, including such books as Liam Hudson's *Contrary Intelligences*, Jung's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Mead's *Growing Up in New Guinea*. The individual teacher could then be allocated, say, £10 to allow him to add his own favourites, provided they are agreeable to the head of department—there may be every point in having a single copy of *The Little Red School Book*: there is none in having ten. It is probably only the more able readers who will be interested in this material, which should be treated very much as an individualised reading resource.

The administration of this very flexible and various reading needs much more care than most departments have had time or inclination to offer. But when one realises that most of the responsibility for keeping a record of his reading will fall upon the pupil himself, and that it is he who will fill in the card or leaflet that will go with him to his next teacher or class, the task of systematic monitoring becomes less awful.

I admit, however, that what I have suggested does have worrying implications for the teacher of English. He is already being asked to do too much—it is perhaps for this reason that the women now outnumber the men in this subject—and to load him with still more to pack into his six periods, is to invite him to lay down his burden. Yet there are adjustments that can be made: why persist in doing interpretation passages in S1, 2 and 3? Why correct in such indiscriminating detail? And, perhaps most questionable of all, why persist in demanding specific writing activities from children who have not had anything like enough experience of *reading* that particular kind of writing? We are forever asking our pupils to write prematurely. Even if we do make better use of our time, however, the English teacher will still be up against it, until school language policies are established.

I admit, also, that I see the English curriculum as being firmly based on literature, but make no apology. This kind of English offers any one of our pupils much more excitement and intellectual rigour than the woolly-minded sociology which passes for English in many of our schools.

Reflection upon a Custom-Built, Fully Integrated, Resource-Based, Multi-Media, Individualised Learning . . . er . . . er . . . School

I visited your palace for a day
and more than once I lost my way.
The odd thing is, as I span round
I could have sworn that I distinctly saw
your feet were off the ground!

John Blackburn

Encouraging Effective Reading

COLIN HARRISON
School of Education, University of Nottingham

The Schools' Council "Effective Use of Reading" project* was funded to examine how children are called upon to use reading in school in the 10-14 age range. This age range was chosen specifically to allow comparisons to be drawn between primary and secondary practice, and the research was not concentrated on English lessons, but covered all areas of the curriculum. As well as producing a quantitative research report, the directors, Professor F. A. Lunzer and W. Keith Gardner, wished to examine the ways in which teachers sought to develop children's abilities in coping with the printed word once they had mastered the basic skills of reading. During the first two years of the project, therefore, the team made efforts to investigate possible areas of development, and one which seemed to be potentially fruitful concerned certain group activities which are more fully described in the appendix to this article under the title "S.R.G.D. Activities." The initials stand for "silent reading with group discussion," and the activities appear to be of value not only in English lessons, where they can stimulate "reading for meaning" and analysis of content and style, but also in other subject areas in which the emphasis is on reading for information.

Group prediction, group cloze and group sequencing involve small groups of readers (no more than twelve) in a silent reading exercise followed by a structured discussion. Unlike many "comprehension" activities, the exercises involve no written work, and since no reading aloud is required, poor or hesitant readers are not put in a position where they draw the attention of the rest of the group to their weakness. Nevertheless, group members are required to comment on the content of the passage and to examine its structure closely, supporting their assertions and inferences by reference to the passage before them. Group prediction and group cloze activities are known to some teachers through Christopher Walker's book, *Reading Development and Extension*[1]; the teachers' study group working with the "Effective Use of Reading" project team have extended and developed many of the ideas it contains and designed some new ones.

A number of teachers have tried out these activities with children (from lower junior forms to sixth form level) and gradually certain positive aspects have emerged:

(1) children enjoy doing the activities;
(2) poor readers are able to contribute, but can also learn from the more fluent readers;
(3) reading comprehension is usually examined through a written exercise—in SRGD activities children whose skills in writing are weak but who are good readers can make a full contribution;
(4) as opposed to (*a*) individual silent reading, (*b*) whole class reading following the teacher, and (*c*) doing a written comprehension test, the readers in the group expose their interpretation to the immediate scrutiny of others. In (*a*) and (*b*) the reader may not be challenged to set his interpretation against that of another at all, and in (*c*) any response from the teacher as examiner is received at a time when the original reading is largely forgotten and the passage set aside;
(5) the activities involve discussion, but not in an unstructured way; children are offered a much clearer goal than: "Discuss this passage."

Of course we would not claim that these group reading activities should set the framework for all school reading. Neither would we suggest that each of the possible benefits noted above is observed regardless of the content of the passage: if a piece is bland and boring, or too complex or technical for a group of readers, they will not learn from it. The teacher must always make a number of judgments about whether a passage or book is suitable for the individuals in a group. What

*From 1973-76 Colin Harrison worked on the Schools Council "Effective Use of Reading" project at Nottingham University. He taught English at secondary level for a number of years and is currently a lecturer in English in Education at Nottingham University.

[1] Ward Lock Educational (1974).

we do say is that no reader will learn from a text unless he actually engages with it, and that these workshop activities seem to encourage this engagement or reflection in a way that individual silent reading may not.

The classroom potential of these activities has been investigated by a group of twenty-four experienced teachers who attended an extended in-service training course based at Nottingham University. Half of the volunteer teachers were from infant or junior schools, and half were based in middle schools, secondary schools, or further education college. Altogether over 1000 children were introduced to SRGD activities. Teachers agreed to try out the activities with their own classes over two half-terms, and to base the reading tasks on passages which they had

chosen and prepared themselves. The decision to ask the teachers to prepare their own materials was not made in order to simplify life for the researchers; one of the advantages of these activities is that they can be based on content which is related to the normal work of the class or group. This contrasts with the essentially arbitrary content of most reading "laboratory" tasks or textbook comprehension exercises.

Reactions from the teachers who took part were collected using a questionnaire, and from this a fairly full picture of possible benefits and problems emerged. Of the SRGD activities one teacher wrote, "Should be made compulsory by D.E.S. circular!", and two others reported what they felt was a real breakthrough in reading with S4 groups. The activities were generally rated as "worth doing" (48%) or "very valuable indeed" (40%), and many teachers commented that the children enjoyed taking part. "It got them arguing," reported one teacher, and this was felt to be an important aspect of the activity.

Teachers were asked to suggest what aspects of language competence seemed to benefit from each specific group activity, and the answers varied quite significantly. Group prediction, which involves responding to a story or passage presented one section at a time and predicting what is likely to happen next, calls for a number of skills. The reader must read each section carefully, setting it in his own mind against earlier ones and the predictions made from them, and draw new inferences if possible. He must find a way to express aloud what he feels is happening and is likely to happen, working on the basis of partial information. Finally, if the activity is to have any real value, he must be able to respond critically to the statements of others in the group. With younger children the critical response may only relate to statements of fact: someone may have ignored or forgotten a vital piece of information. With older students the discussions will relate to the logical or temporal order of events, to what is artistically consistent, and to the extent to which personal anecdotes can be accepted as evidence. If all this sounds rather like an academic rationalisation of the obvious, perhaps one should stress the point that these insights are those suggested by teachers who have tried group prediction exercises with children from the ages of six to eighteen. What any particular group can gain will be determined by two factors—the passage chosen for discussion and the language competence of the group. If the teacher is able to match these effectively then the activity can be an extremely valuable one.

Group cloze also involves the participant in discussions about meaning and content of the passage as a whole, but since the task is to replace individual words which have been deleted, the focus is generally at the word or sentence level. There is little doubt that this is a fairly taxing activity, and needs careful handling, but it was felt by many teachers to offer a fascinating insight into the level of a child's comprehension of a passage. One

teacher who tried out group cloze with sections from science textbooks was shocked to find that there did not appear to be a book in his department which third-year grammar school girls could cope with successfully. There is currently a good deal of interest in trying the activity with sixth form modern language groups, and some English teachers have found it an ideal tool for encouraging a response to poetry and literary criticism with tentative "O" and "A" level groups. At the junior level some teachers have made group cloze a permanent part of their "reading corner," and the children queue up to take part. From the teacher's point of view group cloze is valuable because it encourages close attention to diction and style in a passage, and because the children share the responsibility for deciding what word is appropriate they can learn from each other. The brief extract from a cloze passage and tape transcript which are reproduced below give some indication of what can take place. The children are of junior school age, and had only tackled group cloze once before.

EXTRACT FROM CLOZE PROCEDURE PASSAGE AND TAPED DISCUSSION

Passage (answers in brackets)

Down at Pagwell Green everyone was all ——— (excited) and delighted. The grown-ups were all getting ——— (out) their best clothes and the children were ——— (asking) for pennies. . . .

Transcript

TEACHER: Right now you can work it out for yourselves. You take turns at reading if you like, like we did last week. So in fact, you can take turns at choosing a word, the others can either agree with it. . . .
SARAH: I'll write it down. I'm not saying anything!
TEACHER: You came out beautifully last week so that's why I'm taping you this week.
SARAH: I didn't.
TEACHER: Yes you did.
DENISE: It isn't on, is it?
PAULINE: Yes, it is.
SARAH: I'll go first.
DENISE: Yes it is on, the thing's going round. Come on, Sarah.
SARAH: Right. "Down at Pagnell Green everyone was all. . . ."
PAULINE: "Happy."
SARAH: "Good and delighted." No . . . I think it's "excited and delighted."
DENISE: Yes, "excited" 'cos it rhymes.
(Sound of child spelling word aloud as she writes).
PAULINE: "The grown-ups were all getting their best" . . . Oh no . . . "The grown-ups were all getting into their best clothes. . . ."
SARAH: On . . . On . . . "on their best clothes."
PAULINE: No, they're all getting "into" their best clothes.
DENISE: All right, we'll say "on."
PAULINE: "Into!"
DENISE: "On!" . . . Go on, put "into."
SARAH: "Into" sounds more original.
PAULINE: Go on, put "into." Go on, put "into."
DENISE: O.K. then. . . .

It is worth noting that the discussion takes place without any intervention from a teacher, and that the decisions to insert "excited" and "into" are both reasoned ones. Denise's comment "cos it rhymes" is a stylistic argument, but it also helps to ensure that the inserted word is the same part of speech as "delighted." For the second insertion, Sarah's initial response is challenged, and she not only changes her word but supplies an argument to support Pauline's choice. With more fluent readers the arguments can become extremely subtle: for example, a participant could suggest that what seems to be the best word in a particular place might not be the most appropriate one because the prose style of the author is too poor.

In group sequencing, as the title of the activity suggests, the emphasis is on the order of events or thoughts in a passage. Working initially in twos or threes the participants attempt to reconstruct the original order of segments of a passage which has been cut up into pieces. The idea behind the activity was originally to find a means of encouraging readers to examine the organisation of a piece of writing, and its logical structure. Many junior school teachers have observed that children take some time to learn that there may be a better way of constructing a story than simply to put down thoughts in the order they happen to occur to the writer. Group sequencing offers a framework for discussing why one paragraph ought to be placed before another. Most fluent readers will tend to recognise a general introductory paragraph or an epigrammatical final paragraph without fully realising the features they have analysed in doing so. Children tackling the activity, on the other hand, have to find ways of explaining why they have decided a certain segment is appropriate as an opening paragraph when their neighbour has decided it belongs elsewhere. A number of teachers have pointed out that this activity is by no

means novel, and have cited English textbooks from the 1930s in which a series of numbered paragraphs have to be given a logically acceptable ordering. This one must accept, although the point should be made that having the passage cut into sections which can be manipulated represents a crucial departure from the textbook exercise. It allows the reader to try out a number of different approaches without being committed to any one initially, and offers a much more worthwhile basis for discussion between two readers. The discussion is also a crucial aspect of the activity. In the original textbook exercise children would no doubt read and respond on their own, and receive no feedback until their responses had been assessed as "right" or "wrong." In group sequencing the active discussion of choices is much more important than approximating to the author's original order. Passages vary, but quite often children will suggest perfectly coherent alternatives to the author's order; they may even improve on it. Some passages from upper junior "information books" have been found by children (and adults) to be strings of facts with no artistic or logical coherence. The children have been quick to appreciate that this kind of writing should be avoided since it gives the reader no framework for learning or for organising the content in terms of relative importance.

Teachers' evaluations of the SRGD activities have also pinpointed a number of problems, most of which are associated with selecting or producing materials. Group prediction works best with passages which have some kind of suspense or denouement, and it was not always easy to find suitable ones. Chemistry and geography teachers have experimented with passages in which information about a chemical or region is given a piece at a time, and children are required to discuss alternative answers as they gradually reduce possibilities. Some teachers have tried group prediction on passages written in instalments by the children themselves, and this has proved a worthwhile innovation; apart from saving the teacher the the problem of finding and photocopying a passage it can be a valuable learning experience for the writer. The comments of the group on a final instalment which is totally unprepared for can be a fairly salutary experience for the budding novelist.

Since group cloze does not tend to involve very lengthy passages no one reported difficulties in preparing these, but two teachers did describe group sequencing as "laborious" to prepare, and another noted that it was not easy to pitch a passage at the appropriate level of difficulty for a group. A passage might seem very straightforward for one group but unapproachable to another, and this would lead to an absence of useful discussion in the former case and wild guessing in the latter. One point of organisation of group sequencing emerged from the teachers' comments: it is crucial to ensure that "second round" discussions take place (i.e. that the decisions of one pair are discussed with another group) in case one member of a small group has been too dogmatic. Another interesting insight has been that having very brief segments (for example one sentence each) actually makes the task more difficult rather than easier. This is because the reader has less information available on which to base a judgement about where the segment comes in relation to the passage as a whole. Three or four sentences seems to be a more useful length for discussions purposes. One teacher's solution to the problem of finding suitable passages has been to ask the children to bring the previous night's local newspaper. If only six or seven children do this there is enough material for SRGD activities for the whole class for a double period. Once the students have become familiar with the activity two groups can be left to choose and prepare passages for the other group to tackle. The groups then work on the exercise which their friends have prepared.

Since the evaluation began, another group activity has been tried out by teachers. Comparative Purposeful Reading (CPR) which was devised by Keith Gardner focuses squarely on the notion of purpose in reading. Two small groups are given the same passage to read and discuss, but a different purpose. For example, with fluent readers the instructions might be "Read the passage from a literary criticism viewpoint, and comment on style, diction, figurative language, etc." while the other group's task would be "Discuss this passage in terms of its scientific methodology, and in particular draw out any ethical or moral considerations." For a younger group and a simpler passage, the aims could be "What are the main points?" and "Is this story believable?" After a period of discussion the

two groups come together and discuss their response to both questions.

Another way of encouraging a fuller response to a passage is to ask two groups to prepare their own comprehension questions on it; each group then tackles the questions prepared by the other. The group's answers are written down and then "marked" by the group which devised them, and finally in a discussion session the children examine the differences between the two approaches. These activities help to make children aware that what they gain from reading a passage will vary according to the purpose with which they approach it. Teachers who have tried CPR have suggested that it is potentially the most exciting and flexible of the group reading activities; it requires no special preparation of materials and yet seems to produce the "active interrogation of the text" which as teachers we wish to encourage.

Providing the passages are chosen with some care SRGD activities are equally successful with streamed and mixed ability groups. The activities do require some flexibility of classroom organisation, since initially at least the teacher needs to give fairly close attention to one group of twelve children. This is no problem for junior school teachers, but presents difficulties for secondary teachers who are only used to working with a fixed group of more than thirty. One solution would be to split the class into three groups and rotate them, with the other two groups working on tasks which require less teacher supervision, such as keeping a journal or reading a classroom library book.

The "Effective Use of Reading" team have been encouraged by the results of this evaluation study and although the research project terminated in August 1976 plans have been made to begin curriculum development work in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire which will focus on developing SRGD techniques within individual subjects of the secondary school curriculum. The rationale behind this initiative is the firmly held conviction of Professor Lunzer and Keith Gardner that SRGD activities are not simply a skill-enhancement programme, but rather that they can be learning tools in their own right. Naturally one must accept that the novelty of the activities contributed to their success, but a series of small experimental studies carried out in six schools has indicated that children remember at least as many facts about a passage read as a SRGD activity as those who merely did a comprehension test on it, and indeed tended to score more highly on questions of inference or evaluation. These results are no more than an indication of the possible value of group reading activities. Nevertheless, the fact that they have been found valuable at every level from top infant to sixth form leads the team to feel that they warrant further serious attention.

Perhaps we should leave the last word to a seven-year-old in one of the experimental study schools: "It was interesting—I had to think a lot though."

Group Prediction

Group prediction exercises involve releasing instalments of a short passage, one at a time, to a group of 8-12 readers. The task is to respond to questions put by a group chairman (at first a teacher but later as the group gains experience, one of the group), the questions being directed at finding out what has been written in the passage, at making inferences from what is read and at anticipating what might happen in later instalments. All reading is silent and no writing is involved. Following reading and discussion of each instalment, the chairman collects the instalments so that no reference back is possible. Readers are encouraged to justify their responses, and other members of the group are encouraged to challenge the responses.

Group Sequencing

For this exercise a passage is photocopied and cut into sections (which may be stuck onto card for greater robustness). Working in pairs, children are encouraged to try to work out the author's original order, although it should be stressed that different orders may be possible. It is important to stress that the pair must explain the reasons for their decisions to each other, and try to reach agreement. If possible this exercise should be followed by an opportunity for two, three or four pairs to compare and discuss their findings, and to share their reaction to the information about the author's order. It is suggested that 6-12 cards are used, and that cards with less than twenty words are not used too frequently.

Group Cloze

No constraints are laid down in relation to passage content or length. Deletions may be every fifth, seventh, or tenth word, depending on the difficulty of the passage and the nature of the audience. With difficult passages deletions should not be commenced until about the hundredth word. Sub-groups of two, three or four children prepare their answers, with stress being laid on the need for convincing argument within the group before decisions are reached. The chairman (usually this will be the teacher at first, but ideally the role should be taken by others) calls the sub-groups together to thrash out a final version. The chairman possesses the original version, but he must try to avoid notions of "right" and "wrong."

READING A POEM

Connect the numbered dots to find
The hidden object.
My daughter knows no numbers but
She knows the pattern numbers make.
"A bird, a bird."
Yes, it will be a bird.
We trace the wandering sequence out,
Discover wings, a beak, an eye,
A tail-fan sharp with fretted feathers,
And make not just a pattern of a bird,
But this bird, with these feathers and these wings,
Made this way only, joining these common dots.

WRITING ABOUT A POEM

Anyone can peel an apple
With a thin sharp knife
    (I can do it)
And throw the skin
To make an initial
    (I usually make a J)
And anyone can guess
What the initial stands for
    (J is for Jenny)
There are a hundred ways
Of peeling and throwing and guessing
    (Who will marry Jenny?)
But the skin has only one way of covering the apple.

Philip Drew

The Underachieving Child in the Mixed Ability English Class

HOWEL JONES

Lecturer in Special Education, Jordanhill College of Education

Any discussion of underachieving children must first establish who they are, and what the nature of their underachievement is, before it can go on to determine what are their needs.

Underachieving or "Remedial" children have one common characteristic—failure in school. But it is important to distinguish between two broad categories of failing pupil. First, there is the child of poor general ability who is failing in relation to established norms. We might designate such a pupil "backward" and note that his needs can only be met by a programme of *general* help within the curriculum. The "retarded" pupil, on the other hand, is one who is of average or above average ability but failing in relation to his measured potential. Such a child needs *specific* help. (It is significant and relevant to our purpose that a recent Schools Council research project to be published this year has found that schools, once they have identified the children in one of these categories, cease looking for ones in the other).

Having located our underachieving pupils we must also take account of the precise nature of their deficiencies. The general screening procedures through which primary school children pass consist of an assessment of verbal reasoning (Verbal Reasoning Quotient—VRQ) and the measurement of reading ability (RA).

An examination of the spread of ability as measured by VRQ in a typical S1 mixed ability class and expressed in terms of their equivalent primary and secondary stages of development revealed:

Primary/Secondary Level	*No. of children in S1 mixed ability class*
S2	7
S1	8
P7	7
P6	6
P5	6

Children with reading ages below 8 still need intensive teaching of mechanical reading skills. An RA of 10+ is essential if children are to cope with the level of English work normally presented at S1 level. Children with RAs between these two levels clearly present a problem, as basic skills, though acquired, are considerably under-developed. There will be anything from 2-6 such children in most mixed ability classes. An examination of Reading Ages of the same class reveals a range of 6 years from 7½-13+. Expressed in school year equivalents it would be:

Reading Age expressed as average for school year	*No. of children in class at this measured level*
S1	2
P7	7
P6	9
P5	7
P4	2
P3	5

The significant dicrepancy must throw some doubt on the validity of such instruments of measurement. How far, for example, does performance in a test of Verbal Reasoning depend on *reading* ability? How closely is progress in reading tied to general cognitive development?

The implications of the need for caution in this area of screening should make us aware of the necessity to discriminate carefully in individual cases and ask if retardation is the result of skill deficiency, a slow rate of cognitive development, missed opportunities, lack of motivation, frustration or other factors or combinations of factors in his social or personal environment.

Once we have made progress in establishing those who are retarded we must identify their areas of need. This will entail a three-fold policy of:

(*a*) assessing ability and performance,
(*b*) providing for their needs,
(*c*) evaluating progress to ensure our success.

Assessment

There are two levels on which measurement by means of norm-referenced, standardised tests may be undertaken:

(i) *Tests of General Ability.* Since the true picture of general cognitive development may, as was said above, be contaminated by the pupil's reading functionality, the underachieving (i.e. retarded) child is best prepared to be tested by means of a Non-Verbal Reasoning Test.
One such is the NFER 3
Educational Psychologists make use of the Terman and Merill Tests which are individual and therefore considered reliable. Another battery of tests are the WISC series which give a total score as well as a Performance and a Verbal sub-score; the discrepancy between these two Scores is often revealing.

(ii) *Tests of Reading Levels:* There are several tests in use in this area.

The Burt Word Recognition Test assesses the child's ability to recognise words in isolation.

The Holborn Test operates at the level of the sentence—for example a reading age of 12 is posited by the candidate's ability to read the sentence "It is essential that engineering apprentices should have a good technical education."

The Schonell Reading Test B offers complete passages or paragraphs for silent reading comprehension.

Gap tests use close procedure (i.e. the supplying of missing words in context). They extend to a RA of 12+ but tend to give very high RAs.

Gapadol extends to RA 16 and can be used with adults. Gapadol has been criticised as possibly leaning too much on the candidate's experience.

Wide/Span (RA 7-15) is being used more widely in schools. This series, like the Bristol Achievement tests, makes more use of vocabulary.

The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability is a method of testing individuals and and offers within one passage a means of checking accuracy, comprehension and speed.

The Edinburgh Test Stage 3 has a new version suitable for S1. This tests five areas and affords the means of constructing individual profiles—

(*a*) Reading for facts
(*b*) Comprehension of sequences
(*c*) Retention of main ideas
(*d*) Comprehension of points of view
(*e*) Vocabulary

This test is both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced though lately criterion-referencing has come to be more favoured by testers.

Class teachers can, of course, make their own informal reading inventories—and indeed this may be more practically useful than commercially-produced tests. The article by Ruth Strang in the OU's publication *The Reading Curriculum* provides most helpful guidance in this. One American version of such an inventory consists of presenting a carefully selected passage to the candidate, checking accuracy of reading and, by questioning, monitoring comprehension. If the pupil is 99% accurate and anywhere between 75-90% clear in his understanding of the subject matter then he is ready for a more difficult passage.

Provision

But once we have accomplished our diagnosis we must consider the provision to be made for the underachieving child.

When selecting material it is necessary to take account not only of the suitability of books as regards concept levels and relevance of the content but also the readability levels so that any text presented to a poorer reader is known to be within his ability. Published lists giving the reading ages of books are useful for this purpose.

The setting up of established procedures are necessary for slow learning children who are often at a loss to know what is expected of them and how they are to go about it. Whereas the retarded child's intelligence may be utilised, the backward pupil functions best within a framework of unchanging routine.

Interaction between the child and external stimuli is essential for learning. By definition this has been deficient in the slow learning

child's experience. It is thus necessary for much *teaching* to take place; general development in the case of the backward pupil, *specific areas* for the retardate.

An understanding of slow learners' problems should lead to a necessary degree of *appreciation* by the teacher of the child's performance for often-times what appears to be a sub-standard is in fact quite an achievement for a child with learning difficulties. At the same time it is essential to avoid complacency when the frontiers of attainment could be extended.

Evaluation

Finally we must evaluate progress. Assessment of progress should be based on specified objectives. Within a developmental context slow learners need to learn specific skills. Thus the teacher is concerned with ensuring that mastery learning has indeed taken place. For this, criterion referenced assessment procedures are most useful.

Slow learners, aware that they are failures, seek comfort from some form of visible record of progress. Apart from general encouraging comments showing the teacher's appreciation of their efforts it also helps if there is some form of tangible representation as for example in the shading of columns showing degree and consistency of performance in Reading Lab cards. Where grades or marks are used they should not merely refer to the group norm but be meaningful to the child in that they reflect his improvement (or otherwise) against his own performance or potential.

Constant appraisal is essential for adequate provision for the slow learner in the mixed ability situation in which sensitivity to emergent needs and concern for appropriate treatment are key factors.

It is in this context that the Remedial Department should operate by providing alternative provision for those children in greatest need or functioning as a servicing agency offering the necessary supportive help for those experiencing difficulty.

REFERENCES

Non-verbal test DH (formerly *Non-verbal test 3*), by B. Calvert. N.F.E.R., 1958.

Stanford-Binet intelligence test scale, by L. Terman *and* M. A. Merrill. Harrap, 1960.

Wechsler intelligence scale for children, by D. Wechsler., rev. ed. N.F.E.R., 1974.

Burt word recognition test, by C. Burt. Hodder & Stoughton, 1938-1954.

Schonell silent reading test B (Test R4), by F. J. Schonell. Oliver & Boyd, 1955.

Holborn reading scale, by A. E. Watts. Harrap, 1948.

GAP reading comrehension test, by J. McLeod *and* D. Unwin. Heinemann, 1970.

GAPADOL reading comprehension test, by J. McLeod *and* J. Anderson. Heinemann, 1973.

Wide-span reading tests, by A. Brimer *and* H. Gross. Nelson, 1972.

Bristol achievement tests, by A. Brimer *and* H. Gross. Nelson.

Neale analysis of reading ability, by M. D. Neale. Macmillan, 1957/8.

Edinburgh Reading test stage 3, Moray House College of Education. Hodder and Stoughton, 1972.

The Reading curriculum, edited by J. Merritt *and* A. Melnik. Hodder and Stoughton, 1972.

This article is a reprint of a digest of a Talk given by Mr Jones at a conference of Lanarkshire teachers. It was first printed in a report of the conference and we thank the authorities of the Lanark Division of Strathclyde for permission to use it.

The Open University Reading Development Course

JOHN HAY SCOTT
Principal Teacher of English, Graeme High School, Falkirk.

I took this course in 1974 since when it has been modified, but essentially it follows the now well established pattern of Open University work. It runs between late January and late October as an integrated system of study: radio/TV programmes, Tutorials and assigments. The basic units (17 throughout the year) come at varying times and are reckoned as taking 8 hours each. Since they are related to material from set texts as well as Tutorial assignments (4 in all) I counted on needing October for doing the Students' workshop assignments and revision for the examination—that left approximately 1 unit per fortnight.

The opening unit was a most salutary one for any teacher ingrained as we all are in our own reading habits. It examines how, as adults, we go about reading, and how we *should* approach the process: the cycle of goals, plans, implementation, development—i.e. having a purpose and approaching the "read" with this in mind. This of course helps any child in every subject—to keep remembering that they are reading for a particular purpose (perhaps skimming for facts) and so is most useful for an English teacher.

Almost incidentally, there then follows the unit in children's reading: incidentally because the expected analysis of reading skills is delayed until the next section. Nevertheless, this too is very useful for an English teacher, particularly if you are concerned as I am, with the materials children read at every stage. The author examines the value of children's literature: its nature; and the role of the teacher. While not accepting all the value judgments, I certainly found it stimulating to read more widely in an area so essential to an English teacher.

The two units that follow are again useful for English teaching at any level. Reading purposes are emphasised once more as well as systematic frameworks for reading (such as S. Q. 3R—Survey, Question, Read, Recall, Review). With something of these ideas in mind, the pupil can realise that he does not read a geography text or a scientific instruction or a short story in the same way. The problems of comprehension are also dealt with and this has a direct bearing on question and response. Barrett's taxonomy of five levels (in order of difficulty, comprehension, literal, reorganizational, inferential, evaluative and appreciative) clearly is important for the English teacher to realize and utilise if the best use is to be made of comprehension. The other half of this section deals with the use of context, including cues and miscues in reading, which helps us realise a child's difficulties in reading.

The earliest stages of reading are dealt with in the two subsequent units. "Preparation for reading" includes the problems of decoding and reading sub-skills, which are met with, of course, in remedial English at any stage. The second part "Early Stages in Reading" is of immediate interest in Primary School, though I suspect that for most of us it is good to be reminded of problems we may have forgotten. I also suspect that a lot of the material (Word cards, phonics, blending, language experience) is of use with immigrant children in Secondary school.

Unit 7 which comes next is a look at the other end—reading for learning, rather than learning to read. Rate of reading and the strategy of reading are looked at, as well as the implications of speed reading and skimming —the latter a useful skill to pass on to pupils.

The following two units look at the "Printed Media and the Reader." Systematic methods of measuring levels of difficulty in a text are considered, though an experienced English teacher may be a better judge in some cases. Varieties of text are also considered in tone and register, none of which is unfamiliar in an English Department.

"The Reading Curriculum" (2 units) comes next. This includes the organisation of the learning process—reading skills developed in a rational way across the curriculum, as the

Primary methods encourage. Resources for reading is the problem in the second part of this section, and this clearly affects us in the Secondary School, although the level examined is of a different nature—reading laboratories library shelves and so on—compared with the more complex system of storage and retrieval of handouts, tapes, books etc, in a secondary school.

"Assessing Reading Competence" is the important start to the next unit, with a structured system of informal reading inventory (measuring oral and comprehension level). Possibly a closer analysis of our own pupils' weaknesses might lead us to group them in more profitable ways—those needing practice in word attack skills: comprehension, extended library reading, or language kits. It might mean also that our class list or profile could include more assessment of specific skills in reading as agents for subsequent remedial work.

"Children with Special Problems" is the subject of the next individual unit, which takes a useful look at specific difficulties (such as decoding, fixation rate, grapheme-phoneme correspondence): reading and cognitive skills: and ways of helping the backward reader. A rewarding section for a teacher of English.

The course is brought together in the ensuing students' workshops units which is a starting point for the student's own special option: this is expected to take about 20 hours overall preparation and implementation. The five options cover major topics of the course. As something of a postscript, there follows the concluding unit on resumés for reading.

So much for the units of study provided by the course team. In addition 3 basic reference books are used throughout, viz: *Reading Today and Tomorrow* (Melnik and Merrit); *The Reading Curriculum* (same authors); and *Reading Problems and Practices* (Jessie Reid): *Understanding Reading* by Frank Smith (Holt, Reinhart and Winston) was almost a set text as well. These three text books alone amass close on 1500 pages of material culled from diverse sources—all relevant to the reading course. Even without one's own scraps of information the texts supplied a great deal of material and information at least unfamiliar to me.

Tutorials were perhaps half a dozen in number and brought together a dozen or so students talking over aspects of the course with the tutor—a good idea if you can manage to attend them all (but I didn't). The assignments are unavoidable and must be submitted by specific deadlines, but the self-discipline is salutary. The radio/TV programmes every week or so, I found of little use. I must confess to having missed quite a number, generally because of other commitments, but those I saw or listened to seemed too elementary and familiar.

Assessing the course as a whole, I found it of value (of great value at times). New attitudes towards reading and its problems come to light; specific ideas can transfer, as I have suggested, to the class-room, and the disciplined approach to the whole subject of reading in the widest sense from earliest to the most sophisticated stages made it a worthwhile course.

THE NEW O.U. READING DEVELOPMENT—A POST EXPERIENCE COURSE

This course replaces the one undertaken by Mr Scot., but he would recognise most of its content. The additional emphasis claimed for it is to "consider what can be done in schools to provide a better preparation for coping with the reading demands of the adult world. The primary emphasis will thus be on comprehension ... it will, therefore, be of interest to teachers ... in secondary schools ..."

The following books are recommended: Moyle, D., *The Teaching of Reading*, Ward Lock Educational (1972); Wilkinson, A., *The Foundations of Language*, O.U.P. (1971); De Leeuw, M. E., *Read Better, Read Faster*, Penguin (1966).

The following are the set books for the course:

Hoffman, M., *Reading, Writing and Relevance*, Hodder and Stoughton Educational;

Williams, A., *Reading and the Consumer: A Functional Approach*, Hodder and Stoughton Educational;

Zimet, S. G., *Print and Prejudice*, ULP;

A Language for Life, (H.M.S.O.)

Another O.U. course of interest and value to English teachers is E. 262 Language and Learning. This course together with the Reading Development Course constitutes Modules 1 and 2 of the 4 module Diploma in Reading Development which the O.U. will be offering soon.

All available information is to be found in the supplement entitled *Diploma in Reading Development* in the current O.U. *Prospectus 1977 Post-Experience Courses*. Complete information on the Diploma will be printed in the *Post-Experience Courses Prospectus 1978*, due to be published in April/May 1977. These publications are available from: The Post Experience Student Office, The Open University, P.O. Box 76, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AN.

A First Year Class Library—Fiction

GEORGE ARTHUR
Craigie College of Education

This list of 45 books is intended to appeal to boys and girls whose reading ages are between 10 and 14. The books are arranged by categories and the annotations, while they may not give as much information on the story as might be wished, do try to indicate which children are most likely to enjoy them. But class teachers should read them themselves before recommending them.

As always, the difficulty is in what to omit from the list. I have tried to keep to certain ground rules, not with total success, in my choice. Firstly, no author is represented by more than one book (but in several instances this book is the first of a series); secondly, most of the books have been published since 1960; thirdly, I have tried to choose books which have qualities that serve the purposes and needs of both teachers of English and their pupils; fourthly, wherever possible I have gone for paperbacks.

The total approximate cost of this collection is £28, but publishers are not now putting prices on all the books in their catalogues, so be prepared to pay more. If you buy all the supplementary titles mentioned in series and trilogies, you will have 87 books and the probable cost will be £47.

1. FANTASY

Watership Down. Richard Adams. Penguin, 80p

Warned of impending disaster, a group of rabbits set out to find and establish a new warren. Their journey leads them into many new and dangerous situations which help to define the positions that each assumes within the group. The book has a strong story-line, diverse and interesting characters, and should provoke a lot of discussion about different types of society, leadership, duty, loyalty and so on. The language is very varied, perhaps not always successfully deployed, but never dull. For a children's book it is unusually long and quite demanding in ideas and vocabulary, but this does not seem to deter youngsters.

The Wolves of Willoughby Chase. Joan Aiken. Penguin 40p

This story is a good introduction to the works of Joan Aiken whose historical fantasies are set in the reign of King George III in the early 19th century. Two girls, Bonnie and Sylvia, are left in the care of a Miss Slighcarp, who turns out to be the archetypal wicked governess. When Bonnie's parents are reported lost in a shipwreck, Miss Slighcarp tries to get rid of the girls, but underestimates their resourcefulness. It is a very entertaining story, vigorously told and witty, but not too demanding in language or plot. If children enjoy this one, let them try *The Whispering Mountain* or *Night Birds on Nantucket.*

Elidor. Alan Garner. Armada Lions, 50p

Four Manchester children are entrusted with the guardianship of the four treasures of the world of Elidor in order to save it from the powers of darkness. These treasures however, as well as causing electrical disturbances, bring determined and dangerous enemies in search of them. The story is exciting and fast-moving, after a slowish start. The dialogue is handled well. This is a good prelude to *The Owl Service* and eventually *Red Shift.*

The Moon in the Cloud. Rosemary Harris. Faber 60p

Reuben the animal-tamer is offered a place on the Ark by Ham for him and his wife if he will bring back a sacred cat from the Black Land (Egypt.) With the help of his animals, he survives, only to find that Ham has lied to him and the Flood is imminent. This is a very witty and amusing book with a range of memorable characters. There are two further books about Reuben—*The Shadow on the Sun* and *The Bright and Morning Star.*

The Mouse and his Child. Russell Hoban. Penguin, 50p

Superficially, this is a story about the adventures of two clockwork mice sent out into the world of the real animals of pond and field (rat, crows, turtles etc.) in search of a home and independence. Such a mixture may not attract many readers at first. But the book is brilliant and difficult. It is violent, erudite, satirical, very funny, philosophical. The characters are memorable, particularly Manny Rat, and there is much penetrating social comment. A rare book, but probably only for the most discerning.

A Wizard of Earthsea. Ursula Le Guin. Penguin, 45p

Earthsea is a wholly created fantasy world of which dragons and wizards are part. The hero, Ged, goes to train as a wizard, being possessed of great natural powers, but his pride and arrogance cause him to release into the world a terrible shadow of unlife which pursues him wherever he goes. The story is absorbing and the language beautiful. It is an utterly consistent and convincing world. This book is the first of three, the others being The *Tombs of Atuan* and *The Farthest Shore.* The middle one is less successful; the last one is as good as the first, possibly better.

The Ghost of Thomas Kempe. Penelope Lively. Pan Books, 35p

Thomas Kempe was a sorcerer in the 17th century but materialises in the 20th century as a poltergeist.

He fastens on 10 year old James Harrison and tries to make him his apprentice, which causes considerable trouble for James. At first Thomas is merely a nuisance but gradually more serious and unpleasant things begin to happen in the village. This story combines humour and seriousness very skilfully and is a good introduction to an author whose books are always interesting and well-written.

Earthfasts. William Mayne. Penguin, 45p

The irruption into our day of an 18th century drummer boy who carries with him a candle that burns with a cold flame, causes all sorts of upheavals. Giant stones move, a boggart disrupts a home, strange phantom figures appear, and the two boys who try to help the drummer boy find themselves in real danger. Mayne can often be a quirky writer, but here he gives a very sensitive picture of the drummer boy's refusal to admit his world is dead and gone. The book is quite difficult but full of rewards for thoughtful readers.

Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH. Robert O'Brien. Penguin, 40p

A most imaginative and thoughtful fantasy about a group of super-intelligent rats who escape from an experimental laboratory and develop a highly organised society. Their knowledge is used to help a family of mice whose home is threatened by the farmer. The story is always interesting and often exciting, and free of whimsy.

Tom's Midnight Garden. Philippa Pearce. Penguin, 40p (approx)

When an eccentric clock strikes thirteen, Tom finds the yard at his uncle's house has been tranformed into an extensive garden of Victorian times. Here he meets a young girl called Hatty. The subtly changing relationship between them, the puzzling nature of time, the beautiful descriptive writing, all contribute to the making of one of the finest time-fantasies for children. Any sensitive reader should enjoy it.

The Hobbit. J. R. R. Tolkien. Allen and Unwin, 75p

This book is a prelude to the adult trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, but can be read independently as a children's book. The story concerns Bilbo Baggins's search for a treasure hoard guarded by Smaug the dragon. He is accompanied by dwarfs and helped by Gandalf the wizard. The book abounds in excitement and humour, and has some unforgettable characters —Collum for one. The whole fantasy world is made richly alive and realistic, with its own history, geography, legend and creatures. It is interesting to compare it with *A Wizard of Earthsea*.

The Sword in the Stone. T. H. White. Armada Lions, 50p

This is a most engaging and funny fantasy about Arthur before he became king of England and when he was known affectionately as Wart. Among the many characters, one in particular will certainly endear himself to the readers, King Pellinore. There is a great deal of gentle irony and sophisticated allusion in the book which some children may miss, but others will revel in. The next step is to read *The Once and Future King*, White's retelling of the Arthurian legends.

2. HISTORICAL (*excluding 20th century*)

Little Katia. E. M. Almedingen. OUP, 40p

The author bases this novel, really an autobiography, on the memoirs of her great-aunt Catherine who tells of her childhood in 19th century Tsarist Russia. She was the daughter of a wealthy nobleman and consequently enjoyed a privileged and often pampered life, but the details of that life make fascinating reading. It is safe to say that this book will appeal to girls rather than boys (the title itself will be enough for the latter); but no slight is intended in that remark—this volume and its companions *Ellen* and *Anna*, which describe the lives of other members of this talented and lively family, are very readable and enjoyable.

Madatan. Peter Carter. OUP, 40p

The setting of this novel is Northumbria at the time of the sacking of Lindisfarne by the Norsemen in 793 A.D. The hero, Madaah, finds that pagans, Christian thegns and monks are equally ruthless in their lust for power, and he suffers much before he finds peace. The story is uncompromising, at times stark, but always compelling reading.

The Slave Dancer. Paula Fox. Macmillan, £1.95

Because Jessie Bollier can play the fife, he is kidnapped by the crew of a slaver so that he can "dance the slaves" on the voyage from Africa. The captain and crew are cruel and evil, but nothing frightens the boy half as much as the actualities of slavery and a slave-ship. How this traffic can corrupt all who are part of it makes memorable reading. Sentimentality, sensationalism, over moralising may appear in some books on this theme—but not here. The book is demanding.

Smith. Leon Garfield. Penguin, 40p

Smith is an 18th century London pickpocket who steals a document which others are prepared to murder for. Unable to read it, he seeks help and in so doing endangers his life but wins an influential friend. The plot is rather involved but some of the incidents—Smith's first bath, the escape from Newgate —are vividly told in racy, lively language. Garfield gives a colourful picture of 18th century life in several of his books. Equally exciting is *Black Jack*.

The Bonnie Pit Laddie. Fredrick Grice. OUP, —

The working conditions in Durham pits at the turn of this century and the struggle between the owners and the miners form the basis of this story. When Dick Ullathorne's father is blacklisted, the boy is forced to leave school and go down the pit. A bad accident, however, forces him to look for another career. An honest and unsentimental story which is particularly successful with pupils from mining areas.

The Stronghold. Mollie Hunter. H. Hamilton, £1.60

This is an outstanding historical novel which re-creates the period near the beginning of the Christian era when the brochs of Orkney were built possibly as a defence against Roman slavers. The power struggle between chieftains and priests is particularly vivid as is the sense of terror felt by the people when the Druid curses them. The story moves briskly with plenty of action and excellent description.

Rifles for Watie. Harold Keith. OUP, 40p

The American Civil War in the Western states is the subject of this quite long novel which recounts the experiences of a 16 year old Kansas farm boy, Jeff Bussey, from the day he volunteers for the Union Army to his return home four years later. The book focuses on the war in a small area of the country and thus makes the issues easier to understand. It is a compassionate book, unsentimental (except for one romantic interlude towards the end when Jeff falls in love, which may cause a few boy readers to jump a chapter), but always deeply interesting and entertaining. It succeeds at various levels, not least as a good adventure story and as history brought alive. Read also *Komantcia*.

One is One. Barbara Leonie Picard. OUP, 40p

Stephen de Beauville is a coward in the eyes of his family and so fitted only for the life of a monk. He runs away from the monastery and sets out to prove himself a fit son for his father the Earl of Greavesby. The book goes far beyond the level of an adventure story, however, by questioning the whole ethic of knighthood and bravery in battle. It is fairly demanding in language and some incidents are not for the squeamish.

The Eagle of the Ninth. Rosemary Sutcliff. OUP, 40p

After Marcus Aquila is invalided out of the army he sets out to find the reason for the disappearance of his father's legion, the Ninth, who were thought to have been dishonoured in battle in Caledonia. As with most of Rosemary Sutcliff's novels, the language is rather literary and so the book may appeal more to better readers. But as always, the background detail is fascinating, the characters well portrayed. Youngsters who enjoy more leisurely stories than Treece's, for example, will want to read more of this author who has contributed so much to the writing of historical fiction for children.

Horned Helmet. Henry Treece. Penguin, 20p

In many ways this story epitomises the best in Treece's Viking books. The boy hero, Bjorn, becomes a crew member of a raiding longship and grows up to be a feared warrior. However, the nomadic life of a Viking begins to weary him as he learns that there are other kinds of courage. The language captures the saga style well: grimly humorous, stark but beautifully descriptive. Excellent for reading aloud.

Little House in the Big Woods. Laura Ingalls Wilder. Penguin, 35p

It could be said that this book is too easy, possibly too childish, for secondary pupils, and yet the simple charm of the story of Laura's childhood in Dakota in the pioneering era of America is hard to resist. Eight further books follow her life up to the time of her marriage and after. The stories are full of fascinating details of their everyday life. What comes over most strongly is the sense of a loving family atmosphere which is free of sentimentality. The other books are Little House on the Prairie; On the Banks of Plum Creek; By the Shores of Silver Lake; The Long Winter; Little Town on the Prairie; These Happy Golden Years; Farmer Boy; First Four Years.

The Lark and the Laurel. Barbara Willard. Penguin, 25p

While not the best of them, this book is the first of five in a series called the "Forest" novels which follow the fortunes of the Mallory and Medley families in Sussex from the accession of Henry VII through to the Civil War. The great historical events are thus present to the reader as sometimes remote happenings which nevertheless have a profound effect on the characters' lives. The books give a detailed account of country life at this time and make enjoyable reading. The four later books in reading order are, *The Sprig of Broom; A Cold Wind Blowing; The Iron Lily; Harrow and Harvest*.

3. CONTEMPORARY (*20th Century*)

Dockie. Martin Ballard. Armada Lions, 35p

When Moggy Harris leaves school, he goes to work on the London docks with his father. But in the 1920's, a docker's life is tough and demeaning, with bleak prospects, so Moggy takes to boxing as a way out. Some teachers and parents may find the realism of this book overdone—the swearing, the descriptions of an alcoholic old woman, the pregnant mother—but perhaps youngsters will enjoy it because of that. The story is told well and the dialogue crackles.

Carrie's War. Nina Bawden. Penguin, 35p

Carrie and her younger brother, Nick, are evacuated to a Welsh village during World War II but find life in Councillor Evan's house very different from home. The characterisation in this book is excellent as is the story which is amusing, exciting and mysterious. Nina Bawden's books are deservedly popular with children because she never talks down to them. For sheer enjoyment, they are hard to beat, although they have many other admirable qalities to add to that.

From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs Basil E. Frankweiler. E. L. Konigsburg. Penguin, 20p

"Straight-A's." Claudia Kincaid runs away from home because she feels she is unappreciated. She takes her brother Jamie, who is a tight-wad, but shrewd, and they hide out in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Their survival tactics are very amusing and touching and more than compensate for a rather weak mystery element which is added to the story. An off-beat book.

Run for Your Life. David Line. Penguin, 40p

This is a very good straightforward thriller about two boys who after trying unsuccessfully to persuade the police that a murder is to be committed, find themselves the target for the would-be killers who must silence them somehow. The pace of the story is excellent and the author makes use of a good deal of colloquial language which matches the setting and characters well. This is a book with wide appeal for this age group.

The Twelfth Day of July. Joan Lingard. Penguin, 35p

Present-day Belfast and the religious divisons of the community form the basis of this novel, which is the first of four about a Protestant girl, Sadie, and a Catholic boy, Kevin, who cross the invisible but well-defined barriers which exist. Far from being a piece of overt didacticism, this series deserves a medal for treating an explosive subject objectively and honestly,

and with humour and sympathy. Very good writing for this age-group and deservedly popular. The other titles are *Across the Barricades, Into Exile, A Proper Place.*

The Hill of the Red Fox. Allan Campbell McLean. Armada Lions, 30p

While Alasdair Cameron is travelling to Skye on holiday he becomes involved in a dangerous and mysterious episode on the train. When he arrives in Skye, the mystery grows, until he no longer feels safe with anyone, except for Duncan Mor his dead father's best friend. The story is exciting and has the added attraction of its Scottish setting which will appeal to anyone who knows the island. The characters are well portrayed and for once speak with genuine Highland voices. A good, fast-moving adventure story.

Jason. J. M. Marks. OUP, 40p

Jason Wright is on board a VC10 which is highjacked by fanatical members of the Japanese Red Army who force the pilot to land in a remote part of Thailand where the passengers are held hostage in order to obtain the release of Arab terrorists from the Israelis. The boy escapes and joins the rescue forces. What is good about this story, apart from its brisk pace, is the emphasis on the seriousness of such crimes and the fact that there are no easy solutions or chances for phoney heroics. An excellent yarn.

The Goalkeeper's Revenge and other stories. Bill Naughton. Penguin, 35p

A book with such a title can hardly fail to attract boy readers, although only one story is about football. This is a very good selection with one really outstanding short story. "Spit Nolan," which never fails to impress any pupils who have it read to them. All the stories are about everyday events and people.

Flambards. K. M. Peyton. Penguin, 40p *(approx)*

The first of a trilogy about upper-class life in Edwardian days which follows Christina's life from the time she is sent to live with her Uncle Russell and her two cousins Mark and Will to her eventual marriage and widowhood. They are romantic stories but very enjoyable and contain irresistible ingredients for girls (first love, rival suitors, horses, a handsome groom) and a possible inducement to boys (the early days of flying). The two later books are *The Edge of the Cloud* and *Flambards in Summer.*

Swallows and Amazons. Arthur Ransome. Penguin, 60p

The attraction of Ransome's books for young readers is that they combine sound practical advice on camping, sailing, fishing and swimming with completely credible adventures and activities. Though some of the dialogue may have dated a bit, the story-telling is still fresh and vigorous, while the range of characters allows each reader to ally himself (or herself) with the one who appeals most to him (or her). There are twelve books in the series, each one over 300 pages long, but once addicted, children will demand the rest, so be prepared. Usually, the addicts will be the better readers.

Ash Road. Ivan Southall. Penguin, 35p

Southall, an Australian, is fond of the theme of children coping with real dangers and difficulties. Most of his novels illustrate this in some way, although one or two tend to overload the story, notably *Finn's Folly.* But he writes well and in this account of children trapped by an advancing bush fire, he keeps a tight control of his material. His books are usually popular and raise many issues for discussion.

The Cay. Theodore Taylor. Penguin, 30p

There is always a fascination in stories about castaways on desert islands and how they manage to survive. In this one, a young white boy and an old Negro seaman are adrift on a raft in the Carribbean after being torpedoed. They finish up eventually on a tiny cay. The old man knows he may not survive the rigours of the life and carefully prepares the boy for being on his own and having to cope for himself. The trouble is, the boy has gone blind. The relationship between the two is movingly described without ever being sentimental or glamourised, and the book should prove very popular. It is short enough to persuade even the most reluctant reader to finish it.

Knight After Knight. Sheila Sancha. Collins. £2.50

Basically this is meant to be a funny book, and it is! With characters such as Sir Vere De Pression, Sir Tiff Fide (and his daughter Myste) and Father Off, it can hardly fail. But apart from being a hilarious tale of chivalry and true love, it also gives the reader an astonishing amount of accurate and detailed information about life in the 14th century. At times the author seems unsure which aspect to emphasise, but it is worth reading nevertheless.

Dougal's Scottish Holiday. Eric Thompson. Brockhampton Red Knight, 25p

The characters from the Magic Roundabout are firm favourites with people of all ages. The stories are very funny, with Thompson's usual brilliant use of language and skilful sense of timing. Can anyone resist the chapter entitled Haggis Hunt and Golf? Persuade your pupils to abandon their pride and enjoy themselves.

How to Be Topp. Geoffrey Williams and Ronald Searle. Penguin 20p

Nigel Molesworth, who is the hero of this saga of life at St Custard's is in the great tradition of William, Jennings and soul sisters at at St Trinians. If your pupils cannot spell, this book will only confirm their worst suspicions that they are right and you are wrong and the advice on how to pass exams should become their Bible. Great fun, and shades of the classic *1066 And All That.*

4. HUMOUR

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Roald Dahl. Penguin, 40p

Charlie Bucket is one of the five winners who are taken to visit the fabled Chocolate Factory of Mr Willy Wonka which contains every kind of confectionary delight children ever dream of. The book is wildly funny with quite a bit of slapstick comedy.

It never fails to succeed with youngsters of many age-groups, not least because of the puns, the names of the characters (Veruca Salt, Augustus Gloop etc.) and the bizarre situations.

The Phantom Tollbooth. Norton Juster. Armada Lions, 45p

The humour of this book is almost entirely of the verbal kind (puns, taking words literally e.g. the Watchdog is a dog with a watch in its middle) and the story is a vehicle for it. It is a kind of Morality Tale about Milo, a discontented boy, who is sent on a journey to find out the need for living and hearing but it is very inventive and witty. More accomplished readers will enjoy it best, although it has wide appeal.

5. FUTURISTIC NOVEL

The Guardians. John Christopher. Penguin, 40p

Britain is divided into Conurbs, densely populated and regimented urban regions, which are fenced off from the County and have no contact with anyone living there. Rob Randall flees there after his father dies but although he finds life much more congenial at first, he begins to realise that this freedom is controlled. The story is not far-fetched and should give rise to a lot of discussion about the future shape of society.

The Devil's Children. Peter Dickinson. Penguin, 30p

Plague has emptied the cities of England and the people have developed an uncontrollable hatred of modern machinery, which has resulted in a kind of medieval life being followed. During this time Nicky Gore has lost touch with her parents and joins a band of Sikhs who are looking for a peaceful place to settle. This is one of three books known collectively as The Changes novels. It deals with the origins of the period and themes such as fear and superstition, how to survive, the law of the strong, the need for banding together, and so on. The other two books are *The Weathermonger* and *Heartsease*.

6. MYTH, LEGEND, FOLK-LORE

The Well at the World's End. Norah and William Montgomerie. (Folk *Tales of Scotland*. Bodley Head, £3.20

There are over 50 stories in this collection gathered from all parts of Scotland, ranging from the humorous to the tragic and including such famous ones as Rashie Coat and the tales of Finn Mac Cool. It is an excellent selection, written in clear and uncomplicated prose, ideal for reading aloud. So few Scottish children seem to know the folk-tales of their own country that a book of this quality should be welcomed and widely used.

Heroes and Monsters. James Reeves. Blackie, £1.85p

Reeves's re-telling of folk-tales and legends are amongst the very best available for youngsters, an outstanding one being the Cold Flame based on a story by the Brothers Grimm. In this volume he presents the legends of Ancient Greece in slightly formal but never pretentious language, and concentrates on a clear story line without too many side issues to confuse the readers. A useful pronunciation guide is given at the beginning.

If reading is so important in school, and we spend so much time on it, how come that so many of our adults... even if they can read to a reasonable extent, don't bother to do so? I want to suggest to you that it is the *quality* of the reading experience that they get in school that influences this situation, and it is there that we should raise our priorities. Keith Gardner once apologised for much of the remedial work he had done saying that most of his efforts had gone into "producing more statistically respectable non-readers."

—DONALD MOYLE, *addressing the National Conference on English for the Slower Learner, June 1976.*

James Inglis—Teacher

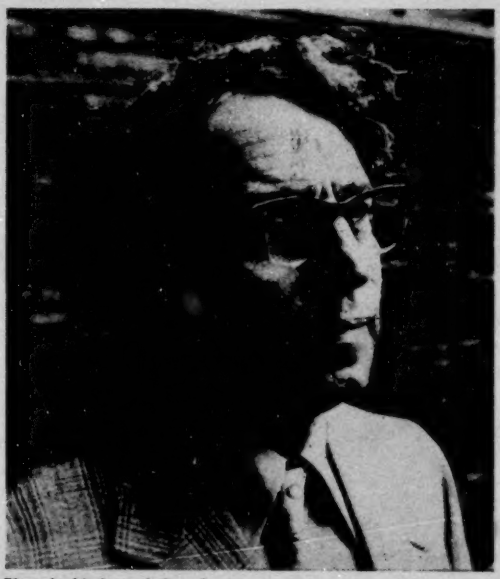


Photo by kind permission of
The Times Educational Supplement (Scotland)

At the end of September, Jimmy Inglis retired.

There is a sentence that readers with a turn of mind for linguistic philosophy may contemplate with more than usual interest. For it combines total factual accuracy with the lowest possible level of probability—as low, say, as if one should read that the Swiss Franc had collapsed. Retirement and James Inglis are terms that simply do not collocate. What comes to mind is energy—both intellectual and physical (in that pavement-devouring stride of his, the umbrella grasped like a weapon, the brief case tucked under his arm clearly to some *purpose*). It would be safer, in fact, to say that in his having ceased to be Principal Lecturer in English at Jordanhill College of Education, an important phase of his career has ended.

He has been in that job for just ten years, and no other could have been a more appropriate climax to his career. It allowed him to exercise his influence in English teaching in Glasgow and the West in probably the most potent way—through the training of teachers. And he has been throughout his career two things before all others—a teacher and a Glasgow man.

Born in Shettleston, he was schooled there and in Coatbridge. After graduating from Glasgow University in 1933, he continued to take the classes leading to the B.Ed. (as it then was). That degree was the passport to educational administration. Committed as he was to the classroom, he characteristically did not take the final exams, but rates the experience an important one, not least because it brought him into contact with William Boyd who asked him to work in his Child Guidance Clinic on Saturday mornings. The influence of that experience and of Boyd himself has stayed with him ever since.

In 1934, he went to Hamilton Academy. His colleagues of that time tend to speak first of Jimmy the demon table tennis player and star of the staff hockey team. But it was a remarkable English Department, led by the late Walter Annand and including such personalities as Robert Miller and Alexander Russell. The staff-room discussions about politics, society and English teaching continue to live in the memories of the participants.

These pre-war years, however, were ones of increasing stress and conflict. Jimmy Inglis claims to have been born a socialist, and is proud of the fact that his grandfather was one of the men who contributed towards Wheatley's parliamentary election deposit. Inevitably he was politically active at this time and made clear his anti-fascism and, as a logical consequence, his conscientious objection to war. Even after the outbreak of war, he continued to organise and speak at anti-war meetings. The antipathy he aroused had its outcome in the setting up by the Education Authority of a sub-committee to look into his (and others') subversive activities. He survived, but not without some bitter memories of the experience. In the process, however, he won lifelong friends who saw in him a man of exceptional integrity and intellectual honesty.

He has continued to be a political activist, speaking on Labour platforms at all post war elections, editing Bulletins and news sheets, and winning the esteem of Labour party workers and M.P.s throughout the west of Scotland. Inevitably he was involved in

teacher politics and his work for the E.I.S. is a story in itself. That work led to his membership of the first G.T.C. (he was chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee) and of the first Board of Governors of Jordanhill College.

From 1943 onwards he was an active in Adult Education, first as a lecturer in current affairs, psychology and literature and then (inevitably!) as a committee-man and organiser, and he is now West of Scotland Chairman of the Workers Educational Association and chairman of the Scottish Institute of Adult Education.

What must concern us here, however, is his work as an English teacher, and for English teaching. He left Hamilton to become Principal Teacher at Airdrie Academy in 1943 and held that post until 1966, when he moved to Jordanhill. Twenty-three years is a long time to sustain an ethusiasm for one post, but his former pupils make it quite clear that he was teaching, in and out of the classroom, with the same passion from first to last.

He had developed, quite early in his career, a philosophy of English teaching, of unusual clarity and coherence. He knew that his function as a teacher was to help his pupils to discover and create themselves through the engagement of their minds and imaginations with what the world has to offer, particularly as it is reflected in literature. He knew that that process of discovery and creation is largely a process of articulation, of rendering perceptions, feelings and understandings into words. And he knew that mental growth is a process of continual adjustment and reordering in the face of new experience. He knew, as well, that the purpose of his work was to help his pupils, not to become merely academic and scholarly (though these are not pejorative terms in his vocabulary) but to go out into the world and act.

As a result, much of the matter of later "curriculum development" was the staple diet in Airdrie Academy. *Contemporary literature* speaking to the present condition, but not of course to the exclusion of literature of the past, for it too speaks to the present. *Scottish literature. "Creative" writing*, not as has recently been extraordinarily assumed, as a vocational training for short-story writers, dramatists and novelists, but as a means of exploring, discovering and articulating the self and social reality. *Practical Criticism*, not as an end in itself, but as the means by which we read with precision, and by which we realise how language carries its meanings. *The long essay* based on private reading and individual study. *The life of the local community*—in all its aspects—as the basis for work in the classroom. (He used to find a visit to the local sewage works "particularly enriching"!)

Work of this kind attracted the attention of the inspectorate, and, when it came into being, of the Exam Board. Jimmy joined the English Panel of the Board and became one of the shapers of C.S.Y.S. English. No-one indeed had a greater influence on the eventual form of that exam than Jimmy Inglis. We are all used to it now, and some have developed skills in finding fault with it. But it is worth remembering what a revolution it represented, what an extraordinary achievement of the free play of the imagination it was (and is). Some sense of its originality can be got by comparing it with the Specimen "A" Grade papers in English produced a year or two earlier by an S.E.D. working party and by attending to the struggles going on now in England to introduce new forms of examination in English for the 16-19 age range.

When the exam was instituted Jimmy became Principal Examiner and his influence on English teaching throughout Scotland continued to be felt.

At the same time he became a member of the Scottish Central Committee on English under the Chairmanship of Richard Hendry —and inevitably one of its weightiest figures. His work for it may stand for all the work he has done on innumerable committees. (Radicals and innovators are often impatient and dismissive of the inevitable slowness of committee work. Not Jimmy). First, he is always thoroughly prepared. Second, he has an eye for detail that frequently escapes others. Third, all his decisions are made within a framework of philosophy and values. Fourth, he can think on his feet and articulate his thoughts with a speed and skill that few people can match.

That means, of course, that he is a fearsome adversary. And there's no doubt that the fire of his intellect has scorched a lot of people. It can be a painful experience to have one's seedling ideas shrivelled by the kind of devastating critique that Jimmy can bring to bear. And not everybody finds it possible to

remember that the attack is directed at the ideas, not the person.

But what everyone remembers and speaks of in his committee work are those many occasions when his contribution has shifted the whole focus of the discussion and moved it to new and more significant level. An outstanding example of this sort occurred on a hot July afternoon when the S.C.C.E. met to discuss its submission to the Munn Committee. A draft had been prepared and was on the table. It was a competent, if unexciting, piece of work setting out the place of English in the school. It was the sort of draft that would have gone through in the absence of Jimmy with hardly a changed comma. He destroyed it, revealing its inward-looking nature, the conventionality and insecurity of its unspoken assumptions, its overly academic view of the nature of English, and above all its failure to show the social relevance of the experience of English. But his critique was not merely destructive, for he was at the same time replacing what he removed with new structures and new signposts. That afternoon was profoundly educative for everyone present. When he is on that kind of form, he is a non-pareil.

He has brought honour to the profession of English teaching in other ways. His contributions to discussion in the Chesters conferences, for example, probably did more to win respect for teachers from visiting academics than any other single thing. He would discourse with erudition on matters of high scholarship, perfectly at ease in any company. Then he would in the next breath deal in intimate detail with the most mundane aspects of classroom management.

It always comes as a surprise to those who don't know him well to discover other aspects of his personality. Most important is the discovery that in personal affairs he is the most gracious, courteous, and kindly of men, loyal and supportive particularly to junior colleagues. And he is somebody who relishes living—a lover of music, drama and art, a connoisseur of wine, a gourmet (albeit a vegetarian one!) and, when he puts on the style, something of a dandy in his dress.

What will he do now? Of course, he will cultivate his garden (strictly speaking, his plot). But then he has always done that among all his other activities. Doubtless the various activities with which he continues to be associated will enlarge their demands on his time. But he should do more. He should set himself a major task.

Jimmy is a good writer, a fast writer and a frequent writer. Witness the remarkable contributions he has made to the T.E.S.S. in the past year or two. But we know him only as a sprinter over short distances and usually in a polemical setting. Perhaps now he will set himself to produce a book. We need a history of English teaching in Scotland to set beside the work that Shaver and Mathieson have done for England. Without such a work our view of our own profession is liable to be a disbalanced one. Jimmy Inglis could write such a book, setting the activities of English teachers within the total social, political and educational context in a way that few others are equipped to undertake. That he should do so is our wish for his retirement.

S. B. S.

New Books from Heinemann

Alpha to Omega Second Edition

The A—Z of Teaching Reading, Writing and Spelling

Beve Hornsby and Frula Shear

"An extremely detailed and comprehensive collection of practical teaching material, which most reading teachers are likely to find quite indispensable."—*Times Educational Supplement.*

The first edition of *Alpha to Omega* has established itself as a uniquely useful language programme for reading retardates of all ages. For the second edition the text has been typed in an improved layout with various corrections, amendments, and additions including four spelling tests which enable the teacher to judge the pupils' level of attainment at each stage. **£2·75**

Alpha to Omega Flashcards

Beve Hornsby

The cards cover vowels, single letters and sounds, consonant digraphs, assimilation, consonant blends, vowel/consonant digraphs, "magic e," hard and soft "c" and "g," vowel digraphs, open and closed syllables, final syllables, and useful social vocabulary. 250 cards **£5·25**

Heinemann Educational Books

48 Charles St., London W1X 8AH

Young Fluent Readers

Margaret Clark

In an attempt to understand more about how children learn to read Dr Clark investigated a group of 32 children who were able to read well on starting school. Their progress through school was then monitored over the early years and their developing interests and achievements closely followed. "It is a striking and important study, the implications of which may be far-reaching, not least in the way we tackle research."—*Times Educational Supplement.* **£1·70**

forthcoming

Language Across the Curriculum

Michael Marland

with specialist contributions by Keith Gardner, Schools Council Effective Reading Project, W. A. Gatherer, Chief Advisor, Lothian, and Nancy Martin, Schools Council Writing Across the Curriculum Project.

This major study appears in January 1977 in the Heinemann Organization in Schools Series. Headmaster of a London Secondary School, a member of the Bullock Commission, and as Chairman of the Schools Council English Committee, Michael Marland is well qualified to write on a language policy that can be applied right across the curriculum, particularly as he has been able to enlist the support of the most able specialists in the field of reading and language in the Secondary School. **about £4·50**

Notes and News

Conference Reports

The National Course: English for Slower Learners 21st-25th June, 1976.

No one-week course can metamorphose a teacher without any knowledge or skills in teaching slow learners into one who goes out dazzling with the ring of confidence. It's not a toothpaste, nor was the intention ever merely cosmetic. Instead the intention was two-fold: to confront ourselves with the best thinking in Britain on all matters pertaining to slow learning; and to take away some fundamental practical techniques which we might actually use in our classrooms. It's not surprising that we are still assimilating the thinking; but it shouldn't stop us from ordering the stuff we need and meanwhile trying our 'prentice hand at some of the techniques.

At the heart of the course was the draft of the S.C.C.E. report "English for Slower Learning Children in the Scottish Secondary School," so much approved of by Professor James Britton in the opening lecture of the course. The Report is shortly to be published by H.M.S.O.[1] and it is hoped that it will give support to teachers faced at the moment by children with learning problems they can neither analyse nor cure. This was the required pre-reading for the course and its thinking proved to be in tune with, though complemented and extended by, the lecturers to the Course.

Apart from Professor Britton who in a remarkable performance called on the best research from many parts of the world to clarify the complex nature of language and learning and to point to the particular difficulties in these processes for slower learners, the course heard from Donald Moyle on Reading, Dr Joan Tough and one of her research team on the development of language skills in young children (a most stimulating and illuminating day in which videotapes proved once again that seeing is believing), from Tom Meenagh who made us all revise our notion of the slow learner as passive victim by demonstrating at once the enormous economic and social disabilities he manages to survive and the richness of the linguistic resources which he brings to the school and which often are ignored or stifled there. Finally, Andrew Chirnside, H.M.D.S.C.I. (Her Majesty's Depute Senior Chief Inspector) brilliantly called attention to the way in which the very organisation of the school and the education system makes it difficult to achieve the kind of flexible response to the needs of children, particularly the slower learner, which should be our aim.

One criticism of the course must be that there didn't seem to be ever enough time left for members to question the lecturers at the time or to think through their significance for the practical side of the course.

The effectiveness of the practical side only time will tell. The course was divided into small groups of nine or ten and tutored in procedures and techniques by (mainly) practising teachers. There was no time to take this one stage further and actually prepare materials for ourselves, and a slightly longer course might have allowed for this crucial step. All the same we felt for the first time that here was the material and there was how to use it: now it was up to us.

These practical sessions consisted of three courses, one of which was done by everyone, with a choice between the other two. The "compulsory" one was concerned with the basics: what do you do with children of minimal literacy, how do you develop the reading, writing, oral and listening skills? The choice was between a course on organising for slower learners in S1 and 2 and one for dealing with them at the S3-4 stage. In nearly all cases the hard practical detail of the courses gave us clear ideas and reinforced confidence for returning to the classroom. We felt, however, practically inevitably, that if only we could take such gleanings from all the tutors (eight in all) instead of only two we could be quadruply efficient. Perhaps something can still be done about this; and certainly we welcome the news that the lectures are to be made available in pamphlet form in the near future.

After all this we were tired, which one part of an afternoon off, and a visit to see the resources of the Torphichen Education Centre concerned with remedial education, didn't altogether assuage. But in the evenings we were subjected to an Audio-Visual Course which consisted of one voluntary and very interesting evening of teachers showing how extremely useful work can be built around tape-slide and 8mm movie-making by the children, and three lecture/demonstrations by the education officers of the B.B.C. and S.T.V. of the radio and T.V. programmes devised to be suitable for slower learners.

In short, a very worthwhile course. The sun shone, the environs of Pollock Halls are arresting and beautiful, the food and accommodation, very acceptable. When do we start spreading the word at Regional or Local level?

Tutors on the course were: Richard Binns, St Mungo's Academy, Glasgow; Brian Boyd, St Cuthbert's High School, Renfrewshire; Brian Carson, Greenfaulds High School, Cumbernauld; Bob Lovett, Remedial and Special Education Department, Jordanhill College of Education; Jean McCloskv, Cranhill Secondary School, Glasgow; Bob Maxwell, Torphichen Education Centre, Edinburgh; Ian Nicol, Perth Grammar School. Course Director was Gordon F. Liddell, Assistant Director, C.I.T.E. Secretary and dogsbody was Iain Robertson, English Department, Moray House College of Education.

[1] *No publication date is yet available.*

A Language For Life: Residential Seminar for teachers in the Ayr Division of Strathclyde Seamill Teachers' Centre, 14-16 May 1976.

BRIAN MURRAY *writes:*

Upwards of sixty delegates from Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools, the Advisory Service and H.M. Inspectorate of Schools attended this conference which, as Mr J. L. S. Waddell, Education Officer (Curriculum Development) said in his Introduction, set out "to illuminate and offer the occasion for discussion of several crucial aspects of the Bullock Report."

While single lecture spots were occupied by Sydney Smyth, Michael Marland, John O'Neill and Anthony Adams, most sessions involved two speakers exploring different sections of Bullock in the light of their own experience. Discussion periods took up issues raised in lectures, while seminars allowed small groups to concentrate on questions of their choice. The number of cross-references and the level of discussion suggested that the format was a successful one, although, as one member put it, "More seminars would have been welcome, but not if it meant missing any of the lectures!"

Two of the speakers summed up the members' awareness of responsibility for language being far more than the jealously guarded preserve of the English Department and whether or not this was widely acknowledged in the schools:

> "Of course, we are all familiar with the content of the Bullock Report. OR ARE WE? I think we would be very remiss indeed, if we assumed amongst our colleagues and amongst the public at large, any real understanding of the sort of issue we have heard expounded... and with which we have been trying to grapple over the course of the week-end." (Anthony Adams)

> "(a whole-school language policy) is a very difficult task for a secondary school, but I think it is a necessary task if our pupils are going to indeed have what is the title of the Bullock Report, *A Language for Life*." (Michael Marland)

What is Bullock's message? How relevant to us? How can it be spread and by whom? These were the dominant themes of the contributions described below.

The Friday evening session was devoted to an exposition of the Seminar's rationale by Mr J. L. S. Waddell before Mr Sydney B. Smyth examined teachers' theory and pupil practice in *Aspects of Language and Thought*, an address which set a high standard for audience participation. Subsequent discussion was animated and prolonged.

Saturday morning began with *Resources for Learning*. Mrs Mary Nettlefold and Mr Alastair MacDonald outlining, demonstrating and making a plea for imaginative, systematic employment of the Library Service and Audio-Visual Aids. A seminar on Resources, chaired by Michael Marland, produced a great number of insights.

Miss Jean M. McKelvie gave a summary of *The Primary Scene*, characterising the latest research and reinforcing the previous speakers' references to resources. She was followed by Miss May Barclay with an inspiring account of *Language in the Primary School*. Aims, organisation, activities, resources and correction were described and given a context in the speaker's philosophy:

> "I'm attempting to create a lively environment within which there is practice in the skills and class teaching where necessary."

Mr Patrick McLaughlin and Mr Brian Murray shared the session of Language and Literature: the former invoked *Shades of Acceptability* in a closely reasoned treatment of attitudes to language, while his colleague made a plea for consideration of a wider range of literature in *For "David Copperfield" read "Kes"*?

Remedial Education found spokesmen in Mr Thomas Meenagh and Mr Charles Wilson: on Advisers' views on *Helping the Slow Learner* being accompanied by *A School Approach to Remedial Education*. It was interesting to note how many of Mr Meenagh's references to the socio-economic factors affecting the slow learner were recognised by the Head Teacher's organisation.

Mr Iain McGillivray and David Menzies examined the philosophy and practical implications of *Mixed-Ability Teaching*. Describing *The Renfrewshire Experience*, the former pointed to the extent to which his L.D.C. Report on S1 had been confirmed and strengthened by Bullock and Britton. Much more aware of language, teachers had begun to back out of the class situation into a group one. Mr Menzies' experience made him "prepared to sweep aside the Committee's explacements, all save one... 'provided it receives a great deal of thought and planning, with "the P.T. as the unarguably crucial figure."

Mr Michael Marland is celebrated for being "the voice of the Secondary on the Bullock Committee." His lecture on *A Whole School Language Policy and the Organisation of a Secondary School* and the ensuing discussion occupied the slot from 8 till 10 on the Saturday night and much longer, in less formal circumstances.

Mr John O'Neill looked beyond Bullock to "the level of performance actually achieved by our pupils in the schools." *Language in the Upper School* examined "standards," the B-composition, experiments with new forms of O and H papers and gave the *facts* on pupils' choice of texts.

Mr Hamish Ross and Mr Gordon Liddell made memorable contributions on *Visual Evidence* and *Using Film*. Their illustrated lectures were crammed with valuable teaching suggestions and references.

And so to Mr Anthony Adams, whose *Language Across the Curriculum* address was the expected display of fireworks, with anecdote, research and passionate conviction being followed by a list of seventeen points for further consideration!

* * *

A report of some 200 pages will be published on 4th October containing the texts of addresses, discussions, seminars and background papers. It should be of use to teachers of English and their colleagues in other subjects. This Report will be the subject of discussion at a meeting of all interested parties on 13th October. It is proposed to establish small groups to study particular recommendations of Bullock.

Local Publications

Grampian English Views

No. 2 of this publication appeared in June, 1976. It has the same kind of vigour and challenging liveliness of the first number. Alec Tait of Rubislaw marks his retirement with an eloquent and deeply-felt appeal for the abolition of the compulsory Higher Literature paper. Malcolm Livingstone writes with sarcastic wit about the use by educationalists, in and out of teaching, of language as an instrument of power, pomp and mystification. John Roberts pursues his concern with the nature of the communication (and therefore of the relationship) between teacher and pupils, based on examples from his own teaching. Roberts contributes, as well, a concise review of the research publication *The Development of Writing Abilities, 11-18*. Alan McIntyre examines the examiners' prose in "O" grade English papers. Peter Stubbings writes about the Region's Adult Illiteracy work. Adam Findlay gives an entertaining account of a couple of years teaching in Queensland. And there is a review of *Watership Down* by a third year pupil at Rubislaw. A good publication. Charles King, Adviser in English, should be able to answer queries about getting copies.

Idiom

The Lothian Teachers' Broadsheet has reached Vol. 3 No. 1 (September, 1976). It is as usual informative on matters of concern to the region's English teachers, and it contains as well some provocative reflections on Practical Criticism by John Blackburn of Moray House; a report from the Regional C.S.Y.S. working party; a valuable note on running a school bookshop by Scott Griffiths; and some slightly apprehensive anticipations of going "open-plan" from Broxburn Academy.

Enquiries to *Idiom*, Dean Education Centre, Belford Road, Edinburgh.

Scola Discussion Paper on the Language Arts

A most interesting attempt to provide a framework for school-based in-service training has been produced by the Language Arts Sub-Committee of the Scottish Central Committee on Primary Education. It is in the form of a paper setting out a series of discussion topics under five main headings with a number of sub-headings in each. The topics are intended to help teachers to look freshly and critically at their own practice in the light of a number of recent researches, surveys and reports—principally *A Language for Life* (the Bullock Report), the SCOLA Survey, and the report on the Craigie Language Project, *Teaching: Active or Passive*.

Enquiries to Scottish Central Committee on Primary Education, Callendar Park College of Education, Falkirk.

Index of Broadcasting Resources

The little pamphlet usefully brings together all current educational broadcasting in a handy and thoroughly well indexed form. It will make planning the use of broadcasts a lot easier than it has been in the past and, one hopes, will enable better use to be made of this rich but neglected resource.

Enquiries to the Scottish Council for Educational Technology, 16/17 Woodside Terrace, Glasgow G3 7XN.

Lanark Division Publications

Mixed Ability Teaching in the Early Stages is a collection of papers from a conference at Seamill Teachers' Centre. In addition to lectures by Bill Jackson (The Primary Legacy), Howell Jones (reprinted in this issue), Gordon Liddell (based on work following up the report *Problems of Group Teaching*), and Margo Nicol (Group Work in the Mixed Ability Class), there are conclusions and recommendations of seminar groups on *Primary-Secondary Liaison*, on *Organisation for Mixed Ability Teaching*, on *Assessment*, and on *The Slow Learning Pupil*.

Higher English—Ideas and Models is the report of the Division's SV Working Party. This admirable report describes itself as follows:

> "Our remit was to consider the needs of the pupil who has achieved a pass in Ordinary Grade with a struggle and who consequently finds the transition to work in Higher a considerable problem, whether it takes one or two school years. With these "poor" Higher candidates in mind, we have provided material, most of which is centred on the theme of AUTHORITY. Our general approach has been to search for an integrated course where all the elements tested in the examination for Higher English are brought together in a meaningful whole. Consequently, we have taken certain things for granted: the work is carried out in block-units instead of the old fragmented approach whether the course is language-based or literature-based; teaching in groups, which we find has usually been discarded by this stage even where it has been widely used in S1 to S4. The report provides the following material: new approaches to the teaching of drama; examples of schemes in which language and literary work are closely linked usually round a "core" text; examination material from various schools in the Division; book lists of recommended material."

Formal and Business Letters

This is an eleven page paper by John McCafferty, Adviser in Business Studies, setting out for the guidance of English teachers, notes on format, punctuation, and layout currently encountered in business correspondence. Examples of various styles of letter are provided. A very useful little paper.
Enquiries about all three papers to Adviser in English, The Orchard Educational Development Centre, 19 Auchingramont Road, Hamilton ML3 6JP.

A Few Voices—1976

This publication by Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council's Education Department is the outcome of a regional poetry competition for Secondary schools sponsored through the Regional Schools Bulletin, and judged by the poet and academic Roderick Watson. The poems in this twenty-six page collection formed his final list from which he chose the winners plus some others noted as "good efforts."

It makes a most enjoyable and heartening read. It

would be invidious to comment on individual pieces especially since Mr Watson has a range of pertinent things to say in his introduction.

Enquiries should go to the Editor, Regional Schools Bulletin, Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council Education Department, Education Offices, Dumfries.

C.I.T.E. LIBRARY

KATE CHAPMAN *writes:*

The Library has paid increased attention to the creation and stocking of the exhibition collections. There are some new collections among those mentioned below; all are available for a three week loan period, first come, first served.

The Scottisn collection has been considerably expanded to cater for teachers creating new schemes of work with the inspiration of *Scottish Literature in the Secondary School*. We also have a good selection of Scottish music and song on cassette tape.

There is much exciting new material being published—write for the current accessions list so that you can choose material you wish to see.

Loans can be postal as well as taken out personally, and the library is open during College terms on Wednesday evening until 8.30 pm.

List of Exhibitions sets:

- Course books
- English out of doors
- Short stories
- C.S.Y.S.
- Primary poetry anthologies
- Language work
- Drama scripts
- Drama (teacher's books)
- Plays
- Creative writing
- Graded and reluctant readers
- Reading series
- English in S1 and S2
- English in S3 and 4
- Selection from the Scottish Collection

New Principal Lecturer in English at Jordanhill

Following the retiral of James Inglis, Mr David J. Rostron, B.A., M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D., has been appointed to the post of Principal Lecturer in English at Jordanhill College. Mr Rostron comes from the post of Head of English Studies at Worcester College of Education. His previous experienece includes a ten year spell at Northern Counties College of Education, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; the headship of English in two schools, first Duke's Grammar School, Alnwick, and then Hayward Comprehensive School, Bolton; and teaching experience in the R.A.F. Education Branch.

He confesses to having felt nervous about moving "from one country to another" but has much appreciated the friendliness he has encountered in the College and in Glasgow. With an interest in music, he is enjoying the cultural life of the city.

Children's Book Fair at Jordanhill

JANET ANDREWS, *English Department, Jordanhill College, writes*:—

A Children's Book Fair will be held at Jordanhill College of Education (Crawfurd Building), Southbrae Drive, from 10.00 to 12.30 on Saturday, 11th December, 1976.

Lavinia Derwent and John Grant have been invited for story-telling sessions; some book-titles will be high-lighted in film and theatre shows. As well as giving young readers opportunity to browse through books before buying them, there will be quizzes, competitions and a Swop Shop where they can exchange books already enjoyed. The range of books for sale will be mainly for 8-12 year-olds.

Tickets (adults - 20p, children - 15p) will be on sale from 1st November at the Crawfurd Building, or from Janet Andrews (English Department) and Margaret Tomlinson (Speech and Drama Department). These tickets can be exchanged at the Tea-Bar for coffee and biscuits, or orange juice and biscuits.

C.S.Y.S. Dissertation Success

Morag Shankland, a pupil last session at Ayr Academy, was awarded an 'A' grade in C.S.Y.S. Her dissertation was entitled "The Influence of Rudyard Kipling on Robert Service."

This being the centenary year of Service's birth, the Canadian government had organised a Tour for Service's daughter and two grand-daughters, and the celebration brought them to Kilwinning, Service's birth place. Irvine Burns Club organised a reception where she read out her dissertation.

Since then, Morag has been notified by the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, that her manuscript will be lodged with the library's Service collection.

LEARNING_THROUGH TALK

Jim McIntosh, Principal Lecturer in English at Dundee College of Education, reviews two books which examine the place of talk in learning.

From Communication to Curriculum
Douglas Barnes. Penguin Books, 202 pages, 90p.
They Don't Speak Our Language
Edited by Sinclair Rogers. Edward Arnold (Explorations in Language Study series), 128 pages, £2·40.

At first glance, *From Communication to Curriculum* looks like a smallish, unpretentious paperback, to be read quickly for "interest." This would be like assuming that $E=mc^2$ can't be a very important formula since it's so short and simple.

I found that the further I got into this book, the more I had to read a given passage several times both to understand it fully and to relate it to the rest of the book—and the problem wasn't in any obscurity of style or disjointedness of argument. I ended up impressed—and depressed. Impressed because Mr Barnes has some very interesting and stimulating things to say; depressed because he makes even clearer something I've become more and more aware of, that is, the near impossibility of the task facing anyone charged with the training of teachers, whether College lecturers or classroom schoolteachers.

The author has tackled the difficult question of the relationship between communication and learning in school. I don't mean in the relatively straightforward sense of classroom domination by the teacher, the prevalence of closed questions, and the alleged deficiencies of rote-learning (although he touches on these), but in the much more complex matter of how learners can share in exploratory talk to "recode" knowledge, what strategies "do groups of pupils adopt when set interpretative tasks, and which of these are more profitable?" and what teaching styles contribute most to profitable and genuine learning on the part of the pupils?

In discussing these problems and others (for the scope of the book is wide and ambitious) Mr Barnes is forced into examining assumptions made by different kinds of teachers, and in fact has to go outside the school context to consider educational philosophy. He inquires into the value of group discussion with and without a teacher, the ways children react in coping with a group learning-task, particularly in the kind of language used (involving perhaps tentativeness and hypothesizing), and the attitudes of teachers towards "final draft" as compared with "exploratory" work.

Above all, he gives some thoughtful attention to the importance of a caring attitude on the teacher's/school's part. As he says, "The teacher's traditional task has two aspects which I shall call *Reply* and *Assess*. When a teacher replies to his pupils he is by implication taking their view of the subject seriously, even though he may wish to extend and modify it. This strengthens the learner's confidence in actively interpreting the subject-matter; teacher and learner are in a collaborative relationship. When a teacher assesses what his pupils say he distances himself from their views and allies himself with external standards which may implicitly devalue what the learner himself has constructed. Both reply and assess are essential parts of teaching; assessment is turned towards the public standards against which pupils must eventually measure themselves, whereas reply is turned towards the pupil as he is, and towards his own attempts, however primitive, to make sense of the world. . . ."

The tone of reasoned and balanced comment, not flying wildly into the face of traditional attitudes, is one he maintains, and, I believe, means, throughout the book. At the same time I feel that he comes down unequivocally on the side of clear and fundamental changes in teachers' attitudes (I mean actual, effective classroom change, not alleged or merely verbal commitment), so that more chance would be given for the learner to be actively involved in creating the knowledge we wish him to have (as well as in learning the established corpus of knowledge available), and more respect would be accorded to what the learner brings to the task.

The author says, incidentally, and casually, "I have argued here that, since the learner's understandings are the *raison d'être* of schooling, an adequate curriculum theory must utilise an interactive model of teaching and learning. . . ."

Although many people might nod piously at the claimed "*raison d'être*" of schooling, I'm not at all entirely convinced that schools generally practise a system which embodies that ideal. Nor is Mr Barnes. Even admitting that his sample is a small one, which he himself also admits, the author quotes enough of the actual classroom talk, backs up his ideas with a wealth of relevant research data from other now more familiar writers such as (inevitably) Bernstein, Labov and Rosen, and argues so cogently and unsensationally, that the final impression is one of sound principles and stimulating practice.

He does not present fully worked-out lesson plans; he does not sweepingly obliterate the more normal classroom methods; however, he explores in a genuinely thought-provoking way the nature of learning and the rôle of language in that process, the assumptions various people make about what is happening in classrooms, and the teacher's rôle in helping learners to learn in an open, exploratory way.

incidentally, what he says is far from being limited only to English teachers and their problems.

Reading over what I've written here, I find the usual dissatisfaction: the book is packed with important questions, full of data carefully analysed, and also bristling with jargon, some of it adopted from other people, some of it new-minted ("decentration, renexivity, the transmission/interpretation view of teaching, deficiency/interaction theories of failure, etc.)—no short review can do all of this justice. However, despite this density of matter, and the slightly off-putting verbal barrier, I must say I found it informative and thought-provoking. Neither radical chic nor the mixture as before.

To do it justice, it must be read thoughtfully—and more than once. This is a book to be classed with *Language and Learning*, *Language, the Learner and the School*, *Lost for Words* and *Listening to Children Talking* as a basic unit in a teacher's language-kit.

They Don't Speak Our Language is made up of five essays on various aspects of language relating to children and young people. In the first essay, by Sinclair Rogers, there is a quotation from C. Cazden, as follows: "It is easy for us teachers to admit that we need to know more about mathematics. But because we all talk, we assume that we're all experts on language. The trouble is that the knowledge about language we require as teachers is one level beyond using it ourselves, no matter how richly we may do so. We need to know about language. And then we have to plan how to use that knowledge in the classroom." This is the kind of pronouncement that immediately strikes a reader these days as a platitude so obvious as not to be worth enunciating. Nevertheless, it needs repeating, and it needs to be acted upon. This book and the series it belongs to can provide help to those teachers who, like me, were brought up on Literature plus Anglo-Saxon. On the argument that practically any knowledge about language can be used with profit by a thoughtful teacher, I commend the book to your attention.

In case that sounds, by implication, deviously dismissive, let me try to elucidate. Every essay in the book is worth reading, I would say. The slight reservation is that some of them are not of direct and obvious relevance to secondary teachers of English, for example Catherine E. Snow's essay on "The Language of the Mother-Child Relationship," or perhaps Mr John Widdowson's "The Language of the Child Culture: Pattern and Tradition in Language Acquisition and Socialization."

However, a great deal depends on the teacher-reader's initial attitude. Ms Snow's essay is in its own way fascinating, tracing the various ways in which mothers talk to children (simplifying the grammar, repeating words, exaggerating intonation patterns, etc.) and showing how children respond. She draws attention to elements in communication of which most people are unaware, thus creating in the reader, one hopes, a greater awareness in a general sense of what goes on in wider human interaction, something far from irrelevant to language work at any level.

Mr Widdowson's essay is a good example of the kind of work being done in that area which links linguistics and sociology. He looks at the way children are to some extent moulded by linguistic means at the family level. His investigation was carried out in various areas of northern England, so that some of his material has a familiar tone to a Scottish ear. He shows how adults shape the child by use of traditional phrases, commands, appeals, puzzles, threats and other kinds of linguistic strategies. The essay is both interesting and entertaining. The whole piece suggested some intriguing reflections on the parallel (and, in some ways, unconscious) means used by teachers to control classes.

The other essays in the book are more obviously relevant to teachers: Mr Sinclair considers "The Language of Children and Adolescents and the Language of Schooling," a useful review of current and rival views of social class differences in language performance, being careful to state what Bernstein said rather than the misunderstood version of what he said which has apparently become the dubious support of recently qualified student-teachers in less enlightened areas. Mr Clem Adelman writes about "The Language of Teenage Groups," giving a kind of historical survey/description of groups such as "Teddy Boys," and considering their mode of dress, their attitudes and their language. He emphasises that "what the special languages of the groups embody are different sets or systems of values." Teachers might be expected to give more consideration and sympathy to this matter, and might find some help as well as some insight in the kind of material presented here.

The last essay in the book, "Talk About Pop," by Mr K. W. Rutherford, probes into the particular way in which young people talk about pop music and performers. He presents transcribed tape-material and suggests the notion of "unanalysability" for our consideration after having looked at the stretches of talk. The language young people use to talk about pop music is not analytical, explicit or adult, nor would such language be appropriate, he argues. He speculates on why children should deliberately choose to adopt such language, given that they can be more explicit and analytical when talking about other subjects, as he maintains they can. The main reason is that they wish to exclude adults, while signalling their own belonging to an identifiable group. What may be needed by adults (more especially, teachers), is a greater understanding of what is going on sub-text, as it were. He says, "More actively, adults can partially participate in the adolescent culture by taking notice of the particular objects of sub-group totems (*i.e.* the selected pop-figures), and avoiding irrelevant cultural condemnation."

This brings up what seems to me an interesting question: the possible consideration of the whole matter of the development of discrimination, not only in music, but, clearly, in such things as poetry, and I'd be interested in hearing Mr Rutherford discussing that. He seems to accept that the pupils' unwillingness to discuss pop analytically (and in fact the irrelevance of such a discussion) is something we have to go along with. Is it?

There is no doubt that this book is worth reading. May I, however, simply point out one or two factors which I feel must be taken into account if you are considering buying it. Perhaps I had bad luck with my review copy, but the first thirty-or-so pages were extremely badly printed, print from one side of a page showing through very often to the other side. The other point is the price. This is a paper-covered book, costing £2·40. The Barnes book, *From Communication to Curriculum*, is certainly as valuable a book and costs 90p. If I were pressed for cash, I must say I'd spend it on the cheaper book.

Scottish Writing

Poetry of North-East Scotland
Edited by James Alison. Heinemann, 178 pages, £1·50.

Helen B. Cruickshank reads from her collected poems
Vol. I, 66 poems; Vol. II, 46 poems. Mono Cassettes, Caley Recording Company, 1975, each £3·24.

Three Glasgow Writers
Alex Hamilton, James Kelman, Tom Leonard. The Molendinar Press, 82 pages, £1·25.

"They say.
Quhat say they?"

Tailors, jewellers, traffic controllers and Royal Physicians keep company with archdeacons, dominies, ministers and surgeons in an anthology which reveals the variety of poetic talent in the North-East of Scotland. After reading it, one is tempted to speculate on the mysteries of soil or diet which, in certain climes and times, produce, for example, Provencal poetry, Neapolitan song-writers and this wealth of talent in one particular part of Scotland.

The volume was edited for the Grampian Regional Council by James Alison and the range of contents and the succinct and informative biographical notes are a credit to the scholarship of the Editor and his fellow-researchers—a band of Aberdeen English teachers. As John R. Allan's foreword clearly indicates, the book is meant for pupil-consumption but, as the Introduction states—and the overwhelming success of the first printing proved—it is a book which has much to offer any Scot interested in the poetry of his land.

The collection is in the nature of "a sampler." The compilers were faced by such an *embarras de richesses* that they had to become more exclusive than they originally would have wished. In spite of this, there is an exciting diversity in this selection which ranges from Barbour (*b.* 1320) to Munro (*b.* 1946)—from the wealth of dialect in the writings of Flora Garry, Alastair Mackie and Alexander Scott to the Standard Scottish of Roderick Watson, Andrew Young and George Bruce—from the great ballads of the North-East to the Bothy Ballads—and from the high seriousness of James Graham's lines on the eve of his execution to the unforgettable saga of that North-Eastern go-between, Macfarlan o' the Sprotts o' Birnieboosie.

To read this anthology is an education and an incentive to further research. Who was Vanlu who wrote such a splendid Scottish poem by translating Horace's Ninth ode (Book I)? What difficulty is there in reconciling the author of "Trawler" with the expert on the teaching of the basic skills? *Was* it a dominie sacked by the Kirk Session "for faults and gross miscarriages" who wrote "Logie o' Buchan"?

In my opinion, this is a book in which several things would give much pleasure to all Scottish pupils whether they be Central Belters or Highland and Island dwellers. A neglect of it by Scottish teachers would seem to me to be as iniquitous as the neglect of Provencal song by any self-respecting Frenchman.

Scattered throughout this handsomely-printed, strongly-bound volume are the popular rhymes of the area—a treasure house of caustic wit. Let me finish the motto of the Keiths, Earls Marischal, which appears at the beginning of this review and on page 12 of the anthology:

"Thay haif said,
Let thame say."

Do *not* ignore what this valuable anthology says. It should be read by all Scots—pupils and teachers—interested in poetry.

And may the curse of the Kelpies (page 72) light on all those Scottish teachers who think that the rural poetry of the North-East should only be studied in the rural North-East!

The collected poems of Helen Cruickshank (Reprographia) are 121 in number. Here in these two cassettes are 112. Some of the omissions, for example, "Lily Lochs: Harris" and "A Lang Guidnicht" are easily understood, but why did the poetess retain the rhythmless "Water Ouzel" in standard English and exclude "Voices from the Waterside"?

Devotees of the late Helen Cruickshank will know how well she sings simply in her own tongue—"Tokens Three," "Hameowre Song For Angus," the much anthologised "Ponnage Pool" and "Shy Geordie." This recording is full of the integrity of the woman—an integrity which is emphasised by a rough, throaty, contralto voice which birls its Rs and makes a poem like "Prayer" ring so convincingly that one wonders how one dared to discuss it on paper as Wheeler-Wilcox-like. But some of the standard English poems still embarrass—"The Eyebrow," for example, or "Beech Leaves."

There is no doubt in my mind that she is at her best in her own rhyming, rhythmic use of her native tongue.

A possible market would be tape libraries catering for Sixth Year Studies and those of Colleges of Education. Two cassettes of this calibre in a school tape library might lead to interesting dissertations on the singing poetesses of Angus in the twentieth century. In Colleges of Education I see it as a means of providing more poems in Scots for teachers of primary school children. It might also inspire student or lecturer to write a biography of this strong, passionate lady whose unbounded love for one other human being was obviously a well-spring of her poetry and whose literary salon in Corstorphine was one of the focal points of the Scottish Renaissance.

The Molendinar Press have already published two volumes of vivid Scottish prose, the re-telling of tales and legends by a masterly "raconteur." This latest offering, *Three Glasgow Writers*, is a number of short stories and some poetry, about fifty per cent of which is in English "with this Glasgow accent" (James Kelman in preface to his contribution). How suitable is Scots for what has become the sophisticated genre of the short story? Whatever the answer, one cannot deny that this Western experimentation is interesting.

In the preface to his three stories, Alex. Hamilton states that he wrote two with a specific audience in mind, pupils in a Glasgow Comprehensive. As a story, I found "Gallus, did you say?" unsatisfactory in that Wullie, the hero, remains an ill-defined character. "Wee Merry" has an artistically satisfying conclusion and the heroine is alive and real. Alex Hamilton does raise the question of supplying a need. Should we not feel obliged to supply our own Scottish

'Sesquippledan Verboojuice!'

You won't find those words among the 80,000 listed in **Longman Modern English Dictionary.** But you will find facts about the man who wrote them among the 13,000 entries on the arts, people, places, science, history and sport.

Much more than you would find in other dictionaries and only £5.50.

We bring life to words

Longman Dictionaries & Reference Books

Our quotation? H G Wells from History of Mr Polly

"Situations" material? But we face another problem when we write about the pupils' concerns in their own language: the language of the ear is not the language of the eye. I feel that poor readers in a Glasgow Comprehensive would have as much trouble in decoding the following:

"Thi biggist thingmmi chib e could lay is hauns on". But by here, it wiz iz if Wullie wantit tae [illegible] im really loass thi heid tull therr wiz nuthin left a is wee bit sanity ataw" ("Gallus, did you say?", Alex Hamilton, p. 12)

—as they have in decoding the standard English of their other texts.

Tom Leonard in his poem sequence, "Unrelated Incident (1-9)," is preoccupied by

"thi diff
Rince tween
yir eyes
n
yir ears" (2)

and the marvellous discovery in (8) that "in the beginning was the sound." This is pawky humour at its best—reflections on absolutes in the Leonardese variety of Glasgow speech. The one short story offering, "Honest," should be prescribed reading for any short-story writer. It is also one of the funniest monologues I have ever read.

Of the three writers, James Kelman, author of "Remember Young Cecil," seems to me to be *the* short story writer of the three. He is not so much concerned with Glasgow speech as with experimenting with the short story form. In "The City Slicker and the Barmaid," a Scottish lorry-driver finds himself south of the Welsh border surrounded by "Oi bee" accents. The narration is in short sentences which have a poetry of their own: "And no comfort entering my tent with the boots soaked through with dew."

"Jim Dandy," the last tale, might be the Rubicon for a teacher selecting short stories as class texts for the Fifth and Sixth. It is a tale, in Glaswegian, of the randy Jim Dandy in which the prelude to intercourse is vividly related.

The cover looks frail but the spine—exposed to my simulation exercises in pupil-attack—is very strong.

DEIRDRE KEANEY,
Craiglockhart College of Education.

Scottish Literature in the Secondary School
An S.C.C.E. Report. H.M.S.O., 1976, £2·55 (by post £3·00). Available from H.M.S.O. Bookshops and C.I.T.E.

If you do not yet have a copy of this Report in your school buy it now. It is an invaluable book on all aspects of Scottish Literature which are likely to be touched on in schools, and is the obvious starting point for any new attempt to come to terms with the teaching of Scottish Literature in the classroom. I reviewed the Report in the last edition of *Teaching English* (Summer 1976), but in general terms. This short supplement to that review is intended to draw attention to some of the detailed and practical suggestions in the Report, and pay particular attention to their recommendations for the Early Stages.

First and Second Year would seem the natural place to begin a consideration of the place of Scottish Literature in school. Unfortunately a moment's thought reminds us that this would ignore entirely the work of the primary school. That the Committee have had to do this is a weakness in the Report, but a weakness which must be attributed to the structure of the Scottish Education system rather than be blamed on the Committee, who were given the specific area of secondary education to consider. Nevertheless the first thing a classroom teacher must do is to discover the literary experience which the secondary pupils are bringing with them from their various primary schools—only then can he plan his next moves. It therefore goes without saying that the secondary teacher should take every opportunity to make contact with his primary colleagues. The attitude to Scots writing and Scots speech forms is one major area where discussion would be valuable. Prejudices and misunderstandings are formed early in children and are hard to eradicate: likewise a healthy and enthusiastic attitude to their own language and the writings of their own countrymen can make the work of the secondary teacher so much more creative and enjoyable.

The Committee, although making no investigation of primary experience and making no assumptions about attitudes already developed, rightly emphasise that the most important quality in any lesson on Scots literature is the sheer pleasure of the work itself. This is probably true of all literature teaching, Scots or otherwise, but it is as well to continually remind ourselves that though we may have high aims in our teaching of Scots, such as helping the pupils understand themselves and their society and their heritage, they are unlikely to appreciate such aims or any heavy-handed approach to them!

On the other hand, the pleasure need not be superficial nor confined to the humorous areas in which the Scots excel. The Committee emphasise the desirability of studying a variety of writings in Scots: poetry and prose and drama; humorous and serious; fictional and documentary; past and present; national and local. Along with this they urge a variety of treatment as appropriate—discussion, group work, choral recitation, expressive writing, dramatisation, or simply reading and listening.

The Committee also suggest work which is not literary in its base. For instance, there is great scope, they believe, for investigating names—family names, street names, place names, as well as local idioms, popular rhymes, street songs, epitaphs, etc. They recommend as materials a *Chambers' Scots Dictionary*, a local street map and telephone directory, a gazetteer and appropriate Ordnance Survey maps. To collect idioms and rhymes and stories, they suggest visits to old people's organisations and that some of the material could be taped and anthologised. Such visits would certainly be welcomed by old folk.

When they turned to poetry, the Committee found a wealth of material but no really adequate collections of Scottish verse which could be used exclusively with the Early Stages. They manifest their enthusiasm for our ballad poetry, however, and give suggestions for thematic groupings. Although this is an area which most Scottish teachers know well, and I need not go into the Committee's survey in detail,

Scots Ballad poetry is in my view the single most important area of Scottish literature for this age group. In my experience of Scottish schools indeed it has seldom been neglected. One thing, however, which the Committee recommend, is the possibility of the ballads being presented as song and as drama, but particularly as song or with musical accompaniment. There are other poems beside the ballads available and the Committee recommends narrative poems, animal poems and poems on people as individuals or types. The Report gives lists of poems which are likely to be successful along with books where these poems may be found.

The practical approach of the Committee is greatly to be commended. Although they are unable to glean much from the meagre harvest of Scots drama which would be suitable for the Early Stages, they do provide comprehensive and detailed suggestions for prose readings, both fiction and non-fiction. The Committee indeed goes so far as to include a classroom study, "Fox and Wildcat," as an illustration of how a set of relatively short Scottish prose texts can be used in a thematic way. They also give prominence to Scottish historical novels, where they show that there is considerable scope for imaginative treatment.

The importance of the School Library is not forgotten. In the Book Lists at the end there are large sections on Children's Fiction with a Scottish setting, and on Non-Fiction with a Scottish emphasis.

It will be gathered even in this short review how much material the Committee have gathered together and made available. I can only repeat the advice I began with. Make sure there is a copy of this Report in your department.

DAVID WHYTE,
Arbroath Academy.

Poetry Anthologies

Here and Human
Edited by F. E. S. Finn. John Murray, 148 pages, £1·30.

Consider These Poems
Edited by Alan Proud. Arnold, 54 pages, 83p.

A Sudden Line
I. Armstrong *and* R. Mansfield. O.U.P., 87 pages, 95p.

These three books represent three quite different approaches to anthology.

Here and Human exemplifies perhaps the most straightforward approach: it is simply a collection of 150 poems contributed by eight contemporary and known poets, a section of the book to each poet. The editorial art is therefore and appropriately minimal, consisting mostly in the selection of the poets to be included. It is sufficient for me to tell you who they are: Patricia Beer, Arthur Bull, D. J. Enright, Seamus Heaney, Robert Morgan, Leslie Norris, Vernon Scannell and Anthony Thwaite. Each poet prefaces his section and while some discuss the background or private importance of specific poems, others discuss larger and more general questions of the nature of poetry itself. Make of them what you will; with the exception of Seamus Heaney's introduction, I found them largely extra to the poems.

My only criticism is of the title of the collection, and of that because I found it misleading. It is taken from the title of one of Vernon Scannell's poems, which the book includes. As a title of an anthology it suggests a thematic approach, which it is not. Better to have called it simply "8 Contemporary Poets," or somesuch, for that is what you get for your money.

Consider These Poems is aimed at the hard-pressed teacher to relieve him of the necessity of preparing his own material—a welcome and an immediately suspect aim and one for which the editor admirably apologises his way through his preface. The form of the book is that of poems sometimes singly and sometimes thematically presented, attended by questions which would take the student into the poems. Alan Proud sees the book's relevant uses as various as practice in thinking and writing about poetry, formal exam practice, a source of homework assignments.

An early fear is that the book will simply be an up-dated questions-at-the-back-of-the-book approach, the obvious and dreary two or three questions scarcely fulfilling the editorial obligation. In fact, Alan Proud does a good deal more. I liked the caution and frankness with which he approached his aim, and I admired the thoroughness with which he carried it out. To test the worth of his follow-ups I separately prepared a lesson on Alasdair Maclean's "Crow" which Proud has treated: suffice it to say that with inevitable variations in treatment, I found his rigorous and satisfactory.

A small reservation is that he has treated poems I would not teach myself—I do not like Spike Milligan's poetry or that of Roger McGough. But there was plenty to satisfy me—poems by Scannell, Hopkins, Plath, Auden, MacCaig, Maclean. If you feel the need for what Proud says he will supply, then be assured he does supply it.

A Sudden Line attempts the most difficult approach, that of a single, continually broadening theme. Working by similarities or contrasts in mood, subject and style, it would attempt to illuminate the thoughts and experiences of young people. It works in three stages: firstly, it would explore their environment, their streets and homes and the people who inhabit them: then it attempts to develop a critical awareness of young people's own ways and those of the larger social world: and in the last stage to direct reflections upon their private world, upon their love.

In a work in which the editors have been so ambitious, niggling criticism will not do. It does not succeed. Certainly one appreciates the scheme—one poem does set off the next, but it issues in a series of sparks, not a line of fire. The anthology does not become individual. Such a theme requires a sustained sensitivity and an underlying seriousness. Too often *A Sudden Line* lapses into pretension and frivolity.

For instance, consider its close. It includes a poem by Edwin Brock, "Let's leave the nursery." Only the title suggests an aptness for the poem, and it is a poor poem at that, one of adult resentment and disgust. It is followed by two poems, one by Hardy and one by Yeats which lift the study back towards its theme, only to have it fall back again at the end with two very trivial pieces, "Pidgin on the Lorne" by Andrew Crozier and "On the Grass" by Miyoshi Tatsuji. To honour its theme, it should not have ended so trivially. That it does so indicates the reason for its failure.

ALAN STEWART,
Kirkcudbright Academy.

Stories on Tape and in Print

"Dimensions" Series
Wheaton. Each 80 pages approx.
School
Edited by John L. Foster. 70p.
Adolescence
Edited by Mike Samuda. 70p.
Love and Marriage
Edited by Mike Samuda. 70p.
Black and White
Edited by John L. Foster. 75p.
Workcards will be available to go with the books in the spring.

The "*Dimensions*" series offers four anthologies of poetry, drama and prose (largely the latter). Each book is cloth-bound and has an appropriate cover photograph in colour. Apart from that, illustrations are limited to a photograph title-page for each section (4-6 per book).

My main criticisms of the series concern the subject matter chosen, the age-groups aimed at and the appeal or otherwise of the layout and print. These three points are so closely linked it is difficult to separate them. To deal briefly with the last point first, that of layout and print, the series presents the material concerning the different topics in a no-nonsense, business-like way. Here is a useful collection of written material with no extras: any visual aids the teacher must supply for himself. In these days of strict economy we certainly get our money's worth of reading from these closely printed pages, but although I am in favour of longish meaningful extracts, rather than superficial bits and pieces, I wonder how many pupils who are not already dedicated readers, might be put off by the appearance of unrelieved pages of close writing in extracts of from three to seven sides each.

Who are the books intended for? I found it very difficult to decide. The titles suggest that *School* might be for S1 or S2 (and certainly here the extracts do not usually exceed three sides each), while *Adolescence, Love and Marriage* and *Black and White* would be relevant to third and fourth years. (*Black and White* I could easily use also as back-up material for 4 "O" and 5 "H"). Whether they would be better used for non-certificate groups or for "O" level groups, however, is uncertain. The criticisms I mentioned above about close print and lack of illustrations might serve as an immediate barrier to weak or disinterested readers in non-certificate classes (though the teacher should be able to hold the class's attention with an interesting reading). On the other hand, because of the number of extracts rather than complete stories included, their use for examining short-story form or literary style with "O" level groups is severely limited. (As some indication of whether complete stories in these books are likely to duplicate those already in Resources Rooms, *School* has "First Day at School" by Wm. Saroyan and "The Fun They Had" by Isaac Asimov; *Adolescence* contains "Sucker" by Carson McCullers, "Indian Camp" by Ernest Hemingway and "One Saturday Afternoon" by Alan Sillitoe. In *Love and Marriage* there is "The Fury" by Stan Barstow, "Spiv in Love" by Bill Naughton and "How Should I Ever?" by Michael Baldwin. *Black and White* has "The Park" by James Matthews, "Two Children" by Fay Goldie and "Brackley and the Bed" by Samuel Selvon).

With regard to the subject matter, school, adolescence and love and marriage are familiar enough themes, and it might be difficult to justify the money for books that contain already frequently anthologised pieces unless they also offer new and interesting dimensions on these themes. Do they? The main dimension in *School* seems to be reflected in the introductory poem "The Lesson" by Miroslav Holub:

> "here begins
> the massacre
> of the innocents."

Pupils suffer "the system" as in Wm. Saroyan's "First Day at School" and also suffer the teachers—Mr Gryce, Crabby B., Old Joe and Windy Bill. Teachers also occasionally suffer, as in the extract from "Unman, Wittering and Zigo." Exams and Sports Days add to the injustice of it all, and while some amusing and interesting written work could no doubt be produced, the overall impression is a negative one of a too-easy disenchantment.

Material that could lead to interesting discussion and writing is included in the sections "What is school for?" and "Future School," though these were much shorter than the earlier sections and presented material more suitable for 4th year "O" level pupils than first years. It is difficult to see how an extract from the beginning of "Brave New World" could be used much earlier than the fourth year.

Adolescence begins with a bit of dry text-book prose from "The Normal Child" by C. W. Valentine, citing some social and psychological difficulties caused by sexual maturity. Non-certificate classes would need a translation. After this, the editor seems to think it necessary to supplement the extracts with a brief, and often unhelpful, running commentary. For example, he states that "Adults are very skilful at making you feel . . . an acute sense of embarrassment" as a prelude to Bill Naughton's crudely funny story of the woman teacher who reacts with disgusted rage at the sight of a small boy in her class who has ingeniously managed to fit a full ink-well over his "pinkler," as he calls it. The mind boggles at possible work card suggestions to follow this!

On the whole, however, apart from some difficult poems by R. D. Laing and Philip Larkin, the extracts in *Adolescence* are interesting and direct in their depiction of the "baffling impulses and emotions" of youth. The story "Sucker" is a good example of this, though most of the extracts preclude careful preparation of follow-up work. Perhaps again there was an over-emphasis on problems and difficulties so that by the last two (again) shorter sections, "The Meaning of it All" and "Grown Up?", the sensitive adolescent might wonder how so many grown-ups in the world have survived such traumas.

Love and Marriage I was not very happy about. The extracts here seem to me often superficial and fail to explore the subject in any balanced and creative way. No doubt pupils will enjoy the coy innuendo of "On the Happy Corydon and Phyllis" by Sir Charles Sedley—but where does one go from there? Write your own risqué poem about sex? Is this an honest

KNOCKOUTS

see the latest 5 titles

	Lukes Garden	Joan Tate	(prob 60p)
★	Save the Last Dance for Me and other stories	Jan Carew	(prob 50p)
★	Stranger than Tomorrow – Three Stories of the Future	Jan Carew	(prob 55p)
	The Robe of Blood	Kenneth McLeish	(prob 55p)
★	You Can't Explain Everything	Joan Tate	(prob 55p)

ALREADY PUBLISHED

	In the Beginning	John Christopher	40p
★	A Northern Childhood: The Balaclava Story and Other Stories	George Layton	45p
	The Bike Racers	Bruce Carter	55p
	Ginger Mick	Joan Tate	50p
★	The Marco File	Peter Buchanan	50p
★	The Six	Janet Green	55p
	Mia	Gunnel Beckman	50p
	The Midwich Cuckoos	John Wyndham	70p

Knockouts – the new paperback fiction series for inexperienced, poor and reluctant readers in the secondary school.
Cassettes accompany six of the titles (★) at £3.50

Send now for inspection copies to:
Sally Hurwitz, Longman Group Ltd., Longman House, Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE.

Longman

and critical approach to the subject? There was little about the reality of a young married couple's experience, neither was there any questioning of the traditional rôles of wife and mother; surely a relevant modern issue. A brief extract from "Alpha Beta" by E. A. Whitehead was the only hint of an alternative to traditional marriage. "Achievement" suggested briefly that some marriages might be happy and durable and contrasted with the cover picture of a young couple staring at a bride leaning, alone and disconsolate, against the church porch.

Black and White I found more intriguing and moving. The extracts were largely from coloured writers facing the problems of living in an alien community. Here, biographical sentences, rather than comments, are helpful. There is humour, as well as pathos, as in "Brackley and the Bed." Though many of the extracts stress the unfounded prejudices of the whites, the last section, which includes Martin Luther King's "I have a dream," is called "Side by Side."

Prejudice is an ever-present problem in an uneasy world, and the aspect of it presented in this book might go towards helping third year pupils upwards (certificate or non-certificate) to gain more understanding and humanity.

As a member of an English department with a limited budget, I cannot view *Dimensions* with enthusiasm, it contains too many unsatisfactory elements for that; but of the four books, I would suspect that for an already reasonably-stocked English department *Black and White* would be the most useful accession.

KATHRYN HEY,
Kirkland High School, Methil.

Longman Imprint Cassette Tapes
Each £3·50.

And the Third Day and **The Shaft**
From *The Leaping Lad and Other Stories.* Sid Chaplin.

The Bike and **On Saturday Afternoon**
From *A Sillitoe Selection.* Alan Sillitoe.

The Human Element and **One of the Virtues**
From *The Human Element.* Stan Barstow.

Tom's Sister and **Seeing a Beauty Queen Home**
From *Late Night on Watling Street.* Bill Naughton.

Those of us who have come home at night suffering from a bout of laryngitis will no doubt welcome such a selection of short stories from Longmans on cassette tape. Further, never being adept myself at producing any convincing dialect other than a rather strong Ayrshire twang which even Glasgow has not yet erased, I particularly appreciated the performance of these stories in their appropriate accent (Barstow and Sillitoe read their own) although one must add that on occasions—without a text—many pupils north of the border would have some difficulty in understanding (*cf.* the soundtrack of the film *Kes* from Blackie's Situations Kit). Certainly these recordings are, on the whole, first class and, barring one or two short sections, are totally comprehensible. However, although cassettes are certainly more convenient and easier to handle, I would prefer the greater clarity and volume to be had from a reel to reel tape recorder, for in my own department and, I judge, in most departments, the best cassette recorder is not really suitable for the acoustics of a normal-sized classroom.

Ideally this is a glorious opportunity for the English Department to encroach on the Language Lab. in the school, for the optimum use of these cassettes is when the pupil can "switch off" from fellow pupils and other distractions around him and concentrate on his own little world of sound. I would see the tapes being used in this way either with or without the text—enhancing both listening and reading skills, while adding a new dimension to the enjoyment of the stories. I do not feel that much is to be gained from playing the tape in the classroom if the pupils do not have the text in front of them—attention rapidly wanders, little pieces of dialect are lost and the plot rapidly disintegrates. Perhaps limiting the audience to a small group might alter that, but obviously this would introduce another problem of classroom management.

With the texts—and most English Departments, I am sure, will stock a set of at least one of these four—and the cassettes there are real possibilities for the teacher. Here is an excellent, varied selection of stories. These are stories about people, their lives, their joys and their sorrows—usually extreme but pertinent examples of what the bulletins referred to as the "laughter and tears that lie at the heart of the world." They are for the reader, of whatever age, to smile at, perhaps to laugh at a little, always to sympathise with, and, particularly in Chaplin's, to think about more seriously. It would be difficult to prescribe with any degree of accuracy what years would best benefit from the stories for some could be read with differing bonuses and for differing purposes with almost all years. (I have heard that *Seeing a Beauty Queen Home* has been warmly received by both first and fifth years although one suspects a little of the irony in the situation is lost on the younger set!)

All except Chaplin's *And The Third Day* are suitable, I feel, for use with an "average" third or fourth year class. Chaplin's would be well worth discussing with a good fifth year investigating the Vicar in the story as he undergoes a gradual re-appraisal of his beliefs through his contact with three diverse members of the community—a gravedigger, a factory manager and a fatally injured miner. *One of the Virtues*—in this case, patience—could quite profitably be used with a mixed ability second year—most, if not all, would be able to identify with the young boy in the story. *The Bike, On Saturday Afternoon* and *Seeing a Beauty Queen Home* are all suitable for a wide range of third year classes, while *The Shaft, The Human Element* and *Tom's Sister* would be more appropriate with an average or above-average fourth year.

In conclusion—at £3·50 the cassettes are by no means cheap but they do add to the enjoyment of the stories. They foster and develop in the pupils the ability to listen attentively and they also increase awareness of the effect of a knowledgeable and intelligent reading of a passage on the understanding and enjoyment of it. Ideally, they are best employed with individual headphones, but they are still a useful addition to the resources of most departments without such "luxuries" for use in "normal" classroom surroundings.

KEN CUNNINGHAM,
North Kelvinside Secondary School.

Drama and Discussion

Pleasure and Repentance
Terry Hands. Wheaton, 79 pages, £1·20.
Dramascripts
Edited by Guy Williams. Macmillan Education.
Baker's Boy
Ray Speakman and Derek Nicholls. 56 pages, 45p.
Jack Shepherd
Ken Campbell. 60 pages, 45p.
Brunel
Keith Parker. 41 pages, 45p.
Guy's Revolt
Bob Taylor. 32 pages, 40p.
Tom Sawyer
Derek Lomas. 58 pages, 45p.
The Island of Three Mad Monkeys
Pat Buik.
and **The Enchanted Shell**
Joan Ware, 27 pages, 40p.

Pleasure and Repentance is an unusual anthology, not because its contents are startlingly original as individual items, but because it grew out of a live performance. It is, in fact, the newly-published programme of the show that the Royal Shakespeare Company has been presenting—internationally and with great success—since 1967. The theme of the collection is "a lighthearted look at Love," and the poems, songs, prose and drama excerpts included present love in all its moods, from the idealistic to the cynical. The book is well suited to classroom work with senior pupils, and although the inclusion of works by such writers as Donne, Suckling, Campion and Hazlitt might indicate that it is suitable only for the more able pupils there is enough humorous, racy and modern material interspersed to appeal to all.

The individual pieces of the anthology are set out in the orthodox manner, but "production notes" have been added unobtrusively at the foot of each page, and the different voices of the original production indicated by initials. Further hints for public presentation are furnished by the simple set plan—as easily accomplished in the classroom as on the stage—and by suggestions as to possible styles of delivery given at the back of the book. The basic idea of the production could well inspire the compilation of similar entertainments, and thus encourage children to view poetry—so often the least popular form of literature—in a new light.

Macmillan's *Dramascripts* is a lively and unusual series of longer plays written specifically for use either in the classroom or by the school dramatic society. The quality of the plays varies widely, but they have certain characteristics in common. All have large casts, with the obvious and laudable aim of involving either an entire class in a reading, or the maximum number of aspiring actors in a school production. A common failing, however, is that the male-female ratio in the casts is often uneven. In *Brunel* there are two parts for girls in a cast of fifty, and there is a similar imbalance in *Guy's Revolt* (25-1) and *Jack Shepherd* (18-4). Obviously girls can read or act boys' parts, but it seems a pity that this should be necessary, particularly when girls are, on the whole, more inclined to enjoy drama and playreading than boys.

Baker's Boy, Jack Shepherd and *Brunel* are only suitable for the senior classes of secondary schools. *Baker's Boy*, set in a large bakery, relates the experiences of the main character with a new job, new colleagues and a new girl-friend. It combines a well-balanced cast with robust language, and the themes of adolescent sexual relationships, and the dehumanising effect of factory life should stimulate discussion. This play will undoubtedly be greatly enjoyed as a class play, or romped through with gusto by a drama group.

Jack Shepherd is set in eighteenth-century London and concerns a notorious thief and jail-breaker, his life, his friends and his eventual death by hanging. The editor warns that the play "is not suitable for use in schools where anyone is likely to be shocked or unduly influenced by its more outspoken passages" and this is perhaps justified. The language is very outspoken, and no attempt is made to play down the violence, corruption and immorality of the society represented. So adolescents, especially boys, with a rigid prejudice against literature will love it, and may even be tempted to join in.

Brunel is the most original and striking of the scripts, even taking into account the above reservation. Centring on the life of the engineer Brunel and his individualistic attempt to interest the Victorian Establishment in his engineering projects, it involves a large cast of characters who illustrate between them the social conditions and prevailing attitudes of the time. This play is more suited to the stage than the classroom, where much of its impact would be lost. It would be a splendid play for an enterprising drama group to tackle, with the possibility of imaginative design and effects, and the inclusion of dance and mime.

Moving down the school, *Guy's Revolt* would appeal to middle secondary classes, though it is the weakest of the plays under review. The rather contrived plot centres around an attempt by a group of Guy Fawkes Guys to stage a protest demonstration.

Derek Lomas's *Tom Sawyer* is a lively adaptation of the novel, faithful to Twain's characters and events, but choosing those incidents most likely to appeal to a young audience, such as the adventures with the thieves in the graveyard and on Jackson's Island. The top primary classes might enjoy this play, and certainly it is an excellent choice for the lower secondary grades, where suitable full-length plays are hard to find.

Top primary classes will also appreciate the two short plays in one volume—*Island of Three Mad Monkeys* and *The Enchanted Shell*. These are both fantasies, the former rather more original than the latter, which is a straightforward re-working of the fairy tale "three wishes" theme.

Dramascripts is a series to be welcomed. The plays are not intended for close classroom analysis, and would not survive such treatment. But they will be profitably enjoyed as lively and imaginative dramatic experiences.

JUDY HAYMAN,
Esk Valley F.E. College.

Viewpoints Series
Blackie, each 42 pages, 78p.
A Time to Care
A Start in Life
It's Your Future

The publisher's specified purpose in producing this series is to "interest groups of all ages in issues arising within common situations."

The books attempt to arouse the interest of pupils by introducing them to such topics as *e.g.* the problems facing the illegitimate child in society, home-school conflicts, industrial tensions and other matters of social concern.

The material is presented in an attractive style; the print is clear and the maximum use is made of pictures presenting aspects of the human dilemma.

Empathetic responses are encountered by means of appropriate questions and each "viewpoint" is reached by the pupil after he has carefully studied the situation, followed through the inferences and evaluated the possible consequences of various solutions to the problem. Each situation presents a REAL human dilemma in which it is obvious that no person, teacher included, is in possession of the "right" answer. Thus it is the kind of approach to comprehension recommended by the *Bullock Report* in chapter ten where it is stressed that "asking a question where there is a genuine problem is more likely to provoke genuine thinking." Furthermore, because of the way in which the questions are interspersed throughout the presentation of each situation, pupils are encouraged to pause and evaluate each stage in the development of the problem.

A wide range of follow-up activities is suggested at the conclusion of each chapter and in the very helpful "Notes for the Teacher" at the end of the book. Lists of film sources, reference books and background reading are provided. The nature of the material is such that inter-departmental planning is encouraged to implement fully some of the suggestions for follow-up work. It is obvious that such co-operation would be with the Departments of History, Geography, Home Economics, Mathematics and Science.

A possible criticism of the books is that they present a number of diverse situations which are not in any discernable sequence. Therefore it is not recommended that the books be used as text-books in the "one-a-week" situation but rather as part of a body of resources within a theme or as initial stimulus material for further exploration of a theme.

Sufficient scope is given for the language development of average and above-average pupils of 13-16 years of age but the material can be easily adapted for use with the less-able pupils of the same age group.

The books would be worthwhile additions to the existing resources in any English Department.

IAIN MORRIS.
Airdrie Academy.

Occasions
Richard Mills. Longman. Each theme book is 48 pages, 50p, and accompanied by a set of six slides, each set £1·35.
Births
Weddings
Funerals
Moments of Truth
Study Guide, 48 pages, 50p.
Read All About It
Bill Ridgway. Edward Arnold, 48 pages, 98p.

Occasions by Richard Mills, consists of four theme books, a student's study guide and four sets of slides. The complete set costs £6·90. The intention is to focus on areas of real, unavoidable experience and to give pupils opportunity to explore their own world, partly through the reflections of other writers.

Mr Mills has wisely chosen theme topics which are well within the experience and skills of his intended readers. I see his work geared toward fourth year pupils sitting an English "O" grade and, with certain modifications and help from the class teacher, towards the capabilities of the non-academic pupil. I also see possibilities for fifth and sixth year minority time courses, where perhaps Art, Music and Drama or English departments could get together and come up with a rather good fifth year Documentary Drama on one or all of the theme topics. *Occasions* is versatile, not least in the kind of worthwhile discussion it will provide.

The books themselves have tastefully-designed covers which are also durable. I like the idea of black and white photographs or sketches inside as opposed to colour. This does not distract the reader's attention.

The variety of authors impressed me and the dramatic potential is extremely good. The back section to each book contains questions for the pupils and suggests ways in which the topic could be extended and elaborated. A set of six slides for each topic is provided. They are nice to have but are by no means necessary. With requisition money so restricted and books becoming more and more expensive, the slides are somewhat of a luxury at £1·35 each set.

The Study Guide covers a variety of techniques and gives lots of ideas. The folder idea, suggested by Mr Mills and extensively explained in the Study Guide is appealing. Each pupil, choosing one of the four topics—*Births, Weddings, Funerals* and *Moments of Truth*—makes a folder and works his or her way through the book, adding as much and as varied material as possible. The folder could be assessed after a given time and added to the pupil's record of work.

I would recommend *Occasions* strongly to those English teachers who have a flair for drama or discussion work or who would like to tackle the themes suggested in a fresh and interesting way.

MRS LINDA BLAKE.
Hunter High School, East Kilbride.

Kidnapped at Christmas
Willis Hall. Heinemann, 80 pages, 80p.
Prompt One
Prompt Two
Prompt Three
Edited by Alan Durband. Hutchinson, each 125 pages, each 85p.

Kidnapped at Christmas is a lively, witty and amusing play by Willis Hall. The play is centred around two main characters, Gilbert and Crosby, two convicts serving their sentence in a shared prison cell. Their ambition is, of course, to escape, which they

New English from Oxford Educational

Begin Here

John Way and Keith Dennis

"Whatever else the pupil takes away from his experience of literature in school he should have learned to see it as a source of pleasure, as something that will continue to be a part of his life.—*The Bullock Report.*

Some of the most gripping episodes in children's literature have been collected together in this volume, and even the most reluctant readers will quickly find themselves involved in the stories. They will want to turn to the books themselves and so to other books; the habit of reading for pleasure should then last a lifetime.

Pupil's book 168 pages, paper covers illustrated 019 833362 5 £1·25
Teacher's resource book 216 pages, paper 019 833364 1 £1·95

A Sudden Line

Rodger Mansfield and Isobel Armstrong

A companion to the successful *Every Man will Shout*, this collection of poems emphasises the thoughts, experiences and feelings of young people, and as in the earlier book, many of the poems are by students.

128 pages, paper cover 019 836108 4 95p

In Context

Language and Drama in the secondary school

John Seely

English and drama share a common concern with language and the use of the imagination. *In Context* seeks to break down the barriers which sometimes exist between the two subjects, and demonstrates that the use of improvised drama can be of direct help to language development.

"A book of great intelligence and care in writing. I can think of no aspect of drama more worth studying just now . . . It is, to put no finer point on it, a necessary buy. And one hopes too that it will not be confined to drama specialists, but that it will find its way into English departments." —*Young Drama.*

176 pages, paper covers 019 913222 4 £1·75 net.

In preparation for Spring 1977:

Dramakit

John Seely

The principles of *In Context* are here put into practical form. *Dramakit* is a folder of about 200 copyright-cleared pages which schools can reproduce, containing ideas and activities for drama and oral English related to a central scene, event or human situation. There are practical notes for the teacher, groupwork, playmaking kits, themes and projects, and the kit will be invaluable for both specialists and non-specialists teaching English and drama to 10 to 15 year olds.

200 pages, loose leaf ring binder 019 913238 0 £5·95

Oxford University Press,
Educational Division, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

eventually do and the audience are invited to take off with them and share in their fun-packed adventures.

Audience participation is a strong feature of the play; and the play itself is geared towards a younger audience on the whole. It certainly makes a change from the traditional Christmas pantomime, but is not really the most suitable of plays for classroom use. The characters lack depth and the plot, though amusing, does not really lead anywhere too quickly. *Kidnapped at Christmas* is a play to be seen rather than read, and will more readily make an enjoyable play to be done by one of the school's drama groups as a seasonal entertainment.

Prompt One, Two and Three is a collection of fifteen, short, contemporary plays, edited by Alan Durband, previously editor of the popular *Playbill* series.

The plays, five in each volume, offer a wide choice of theatrical forms, ranging from theatre of illusion to "realistic" drama. The interest of the reader is aroused by the various themes, and by the way in which they differ in style. The many uses of drama are possible with this collection of plays. I stress drama as opposed to theatre because I feel that every opportunity should be taken to show our students that drama, as such, extends beyond play reading, embracing rôle-play, improvisation, movement, mime, dance drama, situational drama and so on, and these plays, apart from being exceptionally good in their own right, offer interesting and solid material to be used as a springboard for work in the drama room.

The books are recommended for use in the fourth, fifth and sixth forms, to be enjoyed by both the certificate and the non-certificate student, although it is to be expected that the student studying for S.C.E. examinations will study the selected plays in greater detail.

It would prove too difficult a task to give all the plays a mention, but here are a selection to whet the appetite:

"Apples" by Cecil P. Taylor deals with the real and the imaginary. The apple tree is a symbol that is being searched for by a group of school leavers. To find the tree would be to attain their goal in life, whatever that may be. As the play progresses, the tree becomes harder to find, and, in time, they forget what they were ever searching for. Later, a new group of schoolchildren arrive, asking to be guided to the apple tree, but now the older ones ask the question, what *is* the apple tree?

An interesting play for a large cast is a very up-to-date version of the Noah theme: "Voyage of a Lifetime" by Trevor Harvey. In this case, the ark is now a spaceship, but the basic characters and message are the same.

Like the characters in "Apples," we are all searching for some ideal in life. In Chris Bond's "George," David and Judy, a young newly-married couple, think they have found their ideal: a home of their own, a car, and all the mod-cons that money can buy. But since David's mother died a few days ago, they have a new addition to the family in the form of George, a mynah bird who had been the sole companion to David's mother. George has the voice of an old woman and all we hear are bitter complaints of poverty and loneliness. Eventually, the bubble bursts for David and Judy as the bitter truth of their selfishness and desire for material gain comes to the surface and makes their happiness extinct.

In *Prompt Two*, three of the plays deal with the transition from school into the big, bad world. The people we meet see no use whatsoever in striving for any qualifications but want to make a success of their lives in other ways. Bob Taylor's Johnny Pitts in "Here Is Your Life" wants his success through kicking a football, while Peter Terson's hero in "The Ballad of Ben Bagot" has more adventurous ideas, and ideas they remain because they are never put into practice.

The other two plays from *Prompt Two*, "Burgalars" (written in verse), and "A Question of Honour," have a more menacing, violent theme.

On reading the third and last book in the series, the overall feeling is somewhat pessimistic. Everyone must decide their own values in life, but does anyone in our society have the right to decide that, on reaching the age of sixty, life should be terminated by the touch of a switch? That question remains to be answered in John Hale's "Decibels."

Equally menacing in style is Roy Minton's "Bovver" where Vic and Terry work off their grievances against society by tormenting a first-class university student, and turn a tolerant, non-violent articulate person into a vicious threatening human being.

To conclude, I found the *Prompt Series* stimulating, flexible and exciting to use, and feel sure that the series will be enjoyed equally well by both the teacher and the student.

MRS C. SHERIDAN,
St Margaret's R.C. High School, Airdrie.

Written for Children
John Rowe Townsend. Penguin Books, 368 pages, 95p.

High Way Home
Nicholas Fisk. Penguin Books, 107 pages, 35p.

The Jersey Shore
William Mayne. Penguin Books, 143 pages, 40p.

Ruth Crane
Alison Morgan. Penguin Books, 191 pages, 50p.

The Boy and the Monkey
Leon Garfield. Penguin Books, 128 pages, 40p.

The Midnight Fox
Betsy Byars. Penguin Books, 123 pages, 40p.

I occasionally reflect on why a writer chooses to write for children. I think writers of children's books often adopt one or the other of two viewpoints. On the one hand, a writer may attempt to create a special world that he believes conforms to what he understands to be a child's-eye-view of things. Often this viewpoint reveals a closet pubescent with a nostalgia for childhood recollected as simple and innocent. Another quite different approach to writing for children requires that the author interpret the world and human experience faithfully, but in terms that can be understood by the young.

In the United States, where I taught English for thirteen years at the high school and college levels, the librarians, teachers and parents who choose most of the books children will read seem to prefer fiction that attempts to interpret real life, recognisable people and relations, in candid terms. In a general way, this comes down to a question of values and value theory. Children's fiction in America may be more value dominated, teachers and parents choosing

to teach and reinforce some values at the same time that they damn others through neglect. Am I wrong in thinking that in Britain, on the other hand, teachers seek pupil literacy but regard the fiction they read as valueless?

John Rowe Townsend's fine history of children's books, *Written for Children*, takes a stand on this issue when he writes, "I believe that children's books must be judged as a part of literature in general, and therefore by much the same standards as 'adult' books." No duplicity here, for Townsend certainly denies a double standard. His children and mine live in the real world with us. The common values of our culture, the accumulated conscience of a people should find expression and meaning in children's literature. Townsend puts it this way when he asserts that a child's reading should ". . . stretch his imagination, extend his experience, give him some new awareness of people and the world about him."

To make my prejudices clear at the outset, I believe that great fiction has very seldom been written expressly for children. I remain convinced that the best and best-loved children's fiction wins the affection and loyalty of generations of children because of the universal appeal of some themes, situations and characters to the young. Nevertheless, it is not altogether cynical to remind ourselves that a sophisticated knowledge of childhood development and the interests characteristic of a child's precarious and sometimes tumultuous world is as available to the writer of fiction as it is to the teacher. So if teaching has improved with the advent of the disciplined study of the child and his development, then we may expect that the quality of children's fiction has generally improved, too. I think this is the case.

William Mayne's *The Jersey Shore* (Puffin Books), was first published in 1973 and has now been re-issued. It is the kind of novel that teachers and parents admire. Here is the lyric and sensitive tale of a young American boy who crosses a continent to actually sit at the feet of his aged and frail English grandfather. He sits staring at the sea for hours listening to his grandfather's voice trace his own roots in the romantic and gossamer stories of the old man's distant boyhood and young manhood on another coast far across the sea in England. Arthur is surely a rare lad, one of those quiet and thoughtful loners upon whom little is lost. He sees where others only look.

> Something tore a hole in a cloud and a spout of sunshine came down, and was eaten up by the falling rain. The gap did not close, but grew larger, and soon there was a body of sunshine floating in the atmosphere, some way off to the side of the railway track. The sunshine became warm enough to burn its way to the ground, where it began to lift up a stringy mist. There grew more of it and more, and then the cloud and rain had gone and there was a white-blue sky and a disc of sun, almost with a black line round it where it had been drawn.

How we all sometimes long to have a boy like that sitting in our classroom. But this rare breed is largely found in children's fiction. *The Jersey Shore* is only a qualified success for all the charm of the old man's involuted tale of love and error and the pain of loss. Arthur, the boy who hears and learns, the acolyte of romance, is so idealised as to be scarcely a believable rarity. The novel's greatest weakness is a concluding chapter that leap-frogs the reader a decade into Arthur's future when World War II and the American Air Force bring him full circle back to England and Osney, his grandfather's home village. There is no restraining the indefatigable Mayne until Arthur stands before the Loving house from which emerges the most recent descendant of the castaway slave's child Annie Lovink, another great beauty herself in whom Arthur can immediately discover *his* fated love, free at last of the ancient curse of miscegenation. It is all too much really, a prodigal indulgence by a major writing talent.

Leon Garfield's *Adventures of the Boy and the Monkey*, a trio of stories first published in 1969, 1972 and 1973 and now issued as a Puffin Book, bears that craftsman's by now familiar stamp of exuberance and wit. These three tales of Tim, a street child and a thief, and his trained accomplice, Pistol the monkey, are staged in a kind of costume party version of eighteenth-century England with Newgate Gaol, convict transportation, and a plantation in America figuring importantly in the plot of a boy thief caught, tried and sentenced, who finally discovers a safer way to live by his wits.

The three stories are uneven in quality. The second, "The Captain's Watch" succeeds in large part because of the presence of Captain Stumber, a wily son of the sea and a comic masterpiece. He is perhaps the most vivid and the most fully realised character in these three stories where most of the other characters tend to be two dimensional historical mouthpieces. But with Captain Stumber, Garfield rises to the best prose in this collection.

> The first week of a voyage always pleased him best. Owing to the way the *Sophy Black* sailed, passengers and convicts alike were peaceful with seasickness; so he and his officers could dine in comfort. But when nature had taken its course and the convicts were allowed on the maindeck, Captain Stumber's temper worsened. Each batch he took over seemed more shifty and villainous than the last. Daily he caught himself counting the masts. He was not a trusting man. . . .

The Adventures of the Boy and the Monkey is sparkling Garfield, but it is more ginger ale than champagne. The children will love it. My reservations centre on the values of Tim, who, transported to America, flees with the runaway slave Mr Wilkins to San Salvador, there to ". . . pick nature's pocket; for she won't bring charges against us," says Wilkins. Tim is no Huck Finn fleeing a corrupt society. Tim remains a rogue intent on exploitation in the undeveloped open spaces where the rules are fewer and less stringent. As an American I am also troubled by all those scenes of Tim on the broad shoulders of the black Mr Wilkins. There is friendship and trust in their relationship, true enough, but many black children are only going to see another case of a black man serving a white child. This kind of value myopia in Garfield's book makes me hesitate to recommend it.

Alison Morgan's *Ruth Crane*, a new Puffin book first published by Chatto & Windus in 1973, is a novel fabricated according to the too familiar formula of the young girl's big adventure. Ruth, an American in Wales, is deprived of her father in a road accident

that severely injures her mother and her younger sister. She and her second brother, little Tony, find they must fit into Aunt Mary's family and make some kind of life, an arrangement that could become permanent, in the tiny Welsh village of Llanvvern.

The crisis in the novel is Tony's flight to see his injured sister Patsy and Ruth's search for her lost little brother. There is a crusty eccentric, Old Mossy, who is incomprehensible at times but never threatening, and a helpful, good local lad, cousin Pete. It all works out just fine in end, but we always knew it would.

Ruth Crane is a very routine novel flawed throughout by forced and awkward writing. Of Tony, a difficult and immature child, Alison Morgan can write, "Before the disaster she had watched, uncomfortably, Auntie Mary and the other Welsh relatives grow a little frosty towards Tony, but now they all exuded unlimited love and forbearance, and he revelled in it." Ruth is an aloof and lonely child, but talented and successful in school. This is the way she sees herself.

> She had no wish to be noticed or admired; that would come later, when she got back to New York and would write penetrating essays for her teacher about the Welsh way of life, and amuse her contemporaries with portraits of the local characters.

This heavy-handedness is almost enough to capsize the flimsy plot, but it is a commentary on tried and true plotters that many girls will even wade through this kind of sludgy prose shoulder to shoulder with Ruth in order to save the exhausted Tony from the wild and lonely hills of Wales. I think this is some kind of tribute to the sweetness of young girls.

Perhaps I should say young British girls, for I do not think young American readers could tolerate two pages of Ruth Crane's sappy sexism. Ruth struggles for pages to prepare a meal for the men of the house that will stand comparison with her absent mother's kitchen wizardry. How pleased she is when the men, including cousin Pete, approve and praise her domestic skills. Even the rescue of Tony is only accomplished with the masterful direction of Pete's chummy and clumsy kiss on the back of her neck. Some of this hokum is just amusingly out of date, but many girls and their mothers will find Ruth's easy acceptance of a compliant and subordinate rôle in her relationship to Pete and the other males thoroughly offensive.

Betsy Byar's *The Midnight Fox*, published first by Faber & Faber in 1970 and now a Puffin Book in 1976, is young Tom's account of his summer on Aunt Millie and Uncle Fred's farm and his encounter with a black fox in the wild. Tom, a town boy, is from the first a reluctant hero. His parents, both vigorous and athletic, are off to Europe on a two-month bicycle tour. Tom has no choice but to leave his best friend in the world, Petie Burkis, and face up to exile on a farm.

And then Tom sees the fox.

> I did not believe it for a minute. It was like my eyes were playing a trick or something, because I was just sort of staring across this field, thinking about my letter, and then in the distance, where the grass was very green, I saw a fox leaping over the crest of the field. The grass moved and the fox sprang towards the movement, and then, seeing that it was just the wind that had caused the grass to move, she ran straight for the grove of trees where I was sitting.
>
> It was so great that I wanted it to start over again, like you can turn movie film back and see yourself repeat some fine thing you have done, and I wanted to see the fox leaping over the grass again. In all my life I have never been so excited.

From this point on, Tom devotes his days to quiet waiting in the countryside adjacent to the farm for the fox to appear again. Tom sees the fox many times, and he gradually assumes the rôle of protector, particularly after he discovers the den and the fox's pup. The conflict with Uncle Fred's more traditional view of foxes as natural predators of Millie's turkeys develops predictably until the inevitable day when Fred sets out to hunt the fox and uncover her den. This is agony for Tom who knows there will be no storybook ending to this adventure.

> So I was not like the lonely king after all. I had no beautiful daughter, no muscular friend waiting in the hills, and I knew that my story would not end with wild song and joyous dancing, but with a runny nose and wet eyes.

Fred's hunt is a partial success when he captures the pup, cages him and sits back, rifle at the ready, to shoot the fox when she appears to comfort her terrified pup. On that stormy night Tom frees the pup, and fox and pup run off to re-establish themselves deeper in the forest far from man, by far their most dangerous predator.

The Midnight Fox is a gem of a novel that succeeds by avoiding the hoary clichés of the usual town-boy-in-the-country fiction. Tom is a fully developed character who speaks to us in accents that are uniquely his. Nature is not glorified by Mrs Byars, nor is the fox humanised. This is a small story, after all, of one boy's encounter with an animal in the wild. Their paths cross, the boy watches and admires, and their lives separate again. Awe and wonder, yes, but there is no sentimentality.

This novel is a toughminded exploration of personal and social values and value conflicts. Reluctant Tom is ambivalent towards his aggressive father; parental demands vie with friendship; town opposes country; the fox threatens Millie's turkeys; Tom and Uncle Fred conflict over the value of the fox's life. We watch these conflicts shape young Tom, and we see him grow and mature during this very special summer.

Nicholas Fisk's *High Way Home*, published by Hamish Hamilton in 1973 and a Puffin Book in 1976, is a taut adventure tale of mishap and shipwreck, and the struggle of three teenagers, Baba, Barry and Rupert, to escape from a deserted island where abandoned concrete buildings and equipment portend something terrible that is made all the more frightening by the presence of strange machines that click ominously amidst the desolation.

The ingenious escape from the island, a balloon ascent, is conceived and executed by Rupert, a brilliant English public school boy who is proper and reserved and the butt of jokes by the two Americans, Baba and Barry, until he comes up with the only means of escape. Designing and constructing the balloon is a complicated and exhausting labour, and it is the high point of the novel. The question is always

☐ Action Pack

48 Cards for Drama

Sue Porter

Cards designed to act as a stimulus for drama. They are suitable for mixed ability groups of 9-14 year olds.
Publication October.
Boxed £3 *approx.*

☐ Smudge and Chewpen

Paul Groves and Nigel Grimshaw

Takes some of the most common errors made in writing, and deals with them in a novel and humorous way. For average and below average pupils in the first two years of secondary schools.
Publication December.
Limp £1·10 *approx.*

☐ The Goodbodys

Paul Groves and Nigel Grimshaw

Cartoons depict amusing episodes in the life of a pin-man family, providing reading and writing work for remedial pupils with a reading age of about seven.
Limp 92*p*

☐ Multiple Choice English

Clifford H. Fisher

Suitable for students of lower ability, this Multiple Choice Test Book includes some general English studies to assist the student. A reading list is given at the end of each section and a series of follow-up studies is provided.
Limp £1·30

☐ Experiments in English Teaching

Edited by David Craig and Margot Heinemann

These fifteen articles describe courses recently taught or still in progress which break new ground. Together they give a factual, evaluative and sometimes polemical account of the transformation in literary and cultural studies today, and the tangible results emerging.
Cloth £5 *net*. *Paper* £2·50 *net*.

Please send me the title(s) I have ticked for my inspection and/or *Experiments in English Teaching* on approval.

Name _____

School _____

School Address _____

_____

Edward Arnold
25 Hill Street, London W1X 8LL

whether or not these three novices can make a workable balloon. After all that work, the reader knows that the ascent will be a success.

The common task welds these three into a team, a loyal band, as they stitch and glue the days and nights away. Baba, the spoiled rich brat who weeps when her Italian sandals are ruined in the shipwreck but promptly forgets about Torry, her friend lost at sea in the same disaster, forgets to be arch and snide and nasty in the urgency that surrounds the escape plan. Friend Barry, a wounded foot festering and weak with fever, works on in spite of his pain. Even Rupert puts aside his English reserve as he directs and organises their massive undertaking. But once safe on the mainland again, the bonds that held the trio together are severed. Class distinctions and old prejudices prevail.

High Way Home is exciting and suspenseful. Nicholas Fisk makes the details of the shipwreck and the fabricating of the balloon intensely vivid and compelling. The prose is energetic and muscular, if somewhat predictable in its imagery.

> Rupert watched her go. To his surprise, she shut the cabin doors. Why? Oh, of course—to snub him, literally to shut him out. Having done this, she went forward over the top of the cabin. Rupert watched her go. She was wearing faded shorts, once red but now a strange pink, and a man's white sweater with the sleeves rolled up over the slender glowing brown arms. Her shapely little monkey hands spread out to grip this, clasp that, as she made her way forward. Her long legs, finely boned as a racehorse's, flexed and straightened; tapered muscles appeared for an instant then melted again into the shining brown surface of her flesh. Her bare feet never hesitated, never made a mistake.

A tale of intelligence and creativity brought to bear on the problem of survival, *High Way Home* also shows three very different adolescents before, during and after a crisis. The shipwreck, and even their escape and rescue, is finally just an interlude. Life goes on in its everyday way. "Back to normal," is the way Rupert phrases it. *High Way Home* is a balanced and shrewd depiction of human personality at the best of times and at the worst of times.

JAMES H. HOWARD,
Braidhurst High School, Motherwell.

Language and Creative Writing

The Writer's Approach to the Short Story
Christopher Leach. Harrap, 34 pages, 80p.
The Writer's Approach to the Ballad
James Reeves. Harrap, 47 pages, 90p.
The Writer's Approach to Newspaper Writing
Lionel Birch. Harrap, 61 pages, £1·20.

The Writer's Approach to . . . is an attractive idea carrying with it the implication that we are going to see the creative process from the inside. The three books under consideration here do not always fulfil the promise of the titles. It is obvious from their length that these books cannot present an exhaustive treatment of their subject matter and herein lies their most serious weakness. Physically the books are about the size of a jotter, bound in paper and liberally sprinkled with cartoons, drawings, photographs, newspaper headlines and so on. Pages are divided into two columns of print which is easy to read and the books are convenient to handle. Unfortunately they are not robust and would not survive anything but the most careful handling.

On a more positive note I must say that *The Writer's Approach to the Short Story* has some very positive merits. Christopher Leach does a good job in explaining the essential elements of a short story in a simple straightforward way. He shows us some of the ways in which the short story writer catches and then maintains our interest. He explains with the use of original examples how character and situation can be succinctly evoked. Finally, using examples of short stories by Hemingway and himself, he illustrates the general points he has made. The criticism I make is that too much space in an already short book is devoted to printing three short stories in full.

The book would be useful in introducing 14-15-year-olds to the craft of the short story writer but it is material which I would recommend should be purchased for the class library rather than for use in sets.

The Writer's Approach to The Ballad makes a very earnest attempt to explain and illustrate the perennial appeal of the ballad form. James Reeves convincingly makes the point that ballads were and are popular because they deal vividly and directly with exciting or sensational human experiences, wasting no time on detailed description and explanation.

"What cannot be denied is that those who listened to ballads were as spellbound by a sensational story as are the readers of a modern Sunday paper."

Several lurid newspaper headlines are printed alongside examples of ballads with the obvious intention of reinforcing the idea that the contents of ballads are essentially the same as the contents of the sensational stories of the popular press which grip our attention today. The author goes on to encourage pupils to write their own ballads, stressing the importance of the ballad tradition.

This is a forceful little book, persuasively written and well illustrated by a varied selection of ballads from the obscure to the familiar. An original and useful little book which I recommend in spite of its rather high price.

The Writer's Approach to Newspaper Writing is the the longest of the three books but it is the least satisfactory. Lionel Birch attempts to deal with just about every kind of newspaper writing from the problem page to feature articles and he also devotes his attention to the work of editors and sub-editors, the history of newspapers, the rôle of TV in news reporting and the effect of advertising on newspaper contents. In such a short book it is *not* possible to cover such a wide area effectively. The result is a rather bewildering kaleidoscopic effect.

Cartoons and photograph as well as actual newspaper headlines are in the main effectively used in so far as they do make an initial impact on the reader and gain his attention. Unfortunately the material in the text is less impressive. To be fair, the boo. does provide a very wide introduction to what goes on behind the scenes in producing a newspaper and it would be quite useful in fulfilling that function. On the other hand, it contains little that one would expect

an English or Modern Studies teacher does not already make use of in studies of newspapers. Like the book on the short story, it could be useful to have three or four copies available for pupils to refer to, but in these days of savage cuts in educational expenditure, many teachers would consider this one an expensive luxury at £·20 per copy.

GORDON BISHOP,
Elgin Academy.

English for Living Book 4
Albert Rowe. Macmillan, 160 pages, £1·35.

Bridges—Ways to English
W. F. Stevens *and* J. P. Wilkinson. Ginn, 88 pages, £1·25.

Feelings into Words—A Creative writing course, Stages 1, 2 and 3
Christopher Copeman *and* Graham Barrett. Ward Lock Educational Ltd. Stage 1, 96 pages; Stage 2, 112 pages; Stage 3, 112 pages; each £1·25.

English for Living is the fourth in Albert Rowe's "English for Living" series, and like books one, two and three it is more suited to the needs and interests of the non-certificate or "bridge" groups than to those of certificate classes.

Several linked passages come from the Macmillan "Topliner" series, and together with others from authors such as John Wyndham and Laurie Lee, should engage and possibly hold the interest of the less able readers.

Miming (books one, two and three) has given way to rôlé playing, and there is an attempt at preparing the school leaver for the rigours of the outside world by introducing discussion sessions on interviews, choice of careers and similar topics. A cautionary tale concerning teenagers and under-age drinking is put in as a timely warning. While it is laudable on the part of the author to attempt to enlighten the young teenagers about mental illness, the article by David Sheppard is hardly reassuring, and the accompanying photograph of psychogeriatric patients is at once disturbing and misleading.

Some of the suggested exercises are quite useful and widen the scope of the pupils: others are ludicrous in their expectations.

The authors of *Bridges* set out their aims in the introduction to this book.

> It aims to make students of fifteen and above more conscious of what language is, how vital it is to them and how they can use it effectively in different situations.

They also claim that it is suitable for students preparing for C.S.E. and "O" level examinations.

"Building your Bridges," section 1, skims over a wide range of language, from the use of punctuation to autobiography, fiction and scansion.

Section 2 opens with the physiology of speech, and goes on to discuss English dialects, Standard English and phonetic symbols. Much is made of the dialectal words for "The weakest Pig in the Litter," and the accompanying map (stopping abruptly at the Scottish border) seems superfluous.

The third section begins with some information on register and ends with views on the usefulness (or otherwise) of examinations in English.

In attempting to do too much the authors have accomplished too little. The book is unlikely to be of much interest or use to pupils preparing for certificate examinations.

Feelings into Words is a creative writing course. The authors hope that pupils will learn to master the language by personal involvement in the writing of it.

Stage 1 is concerned with encouraging the pupils to sharpen "their five wits." Each sense has a varied and, for the most part, well-chosen selection of prose excerpts and poems, and is adequately illustrated (although the picture introducing "Food and the Sense of Taste" may well cause some sensitive pupils to be non-starters at the meat course). The book abounds in opportunities to explore the senses and write about them. The important factor is that the pupils are compelled to turn to their own experiences and to write sincerely about them. For those teachers who have long preached the doctrine of "write about what you know," this book is ideal.

Stage 2 leads the pupil from an examination of self to a study of response to external stimuli. A wide range of emotions is covered, again with passages and poems of literary merit chosen to arouse the interest of pupils. Joy, fear, courage, guilt, self-consciousness and affection are all adequately represented. I would, however, be very dubious about encouraging pupils to do a bit of finger bending and biting so that they could then write about the resulting pain (Section 1). Again, after each section, there are excellent opportunities for creative writing, starting from personal experience.

Stage 3 takes the pupil a stage further by involving him in an examination of himself in relation to others. Friends, groups, parents and school are dealt with successfully. The authors have made a particularly good choice of material in this section, and have included some very interesting introductory remarks to various passages as well as asking leading questions after them. Passages from the works of George Orwell, William Golding, John Betjeman, D. H. Lawrence, to mention only a few writers, cannot fail to meet with the approval of both teachers and pupils alike.

It would be wrong to assume that the authors intend the books to be used in secondary classes indicated by the stages of the course. Although the material in Stage 1 is more suited to the 12-13-year-old stage, much of it could be profitably used at all levels of the secondary school. Classes 4 and 5 would undoubtedly benefit from the work given in Stage 3.

It would not be necessary, or even advisable, to work through the books systematically. Teachers will obviously wish to select the time and the material.

I do not see *Feelings into Words* replacing the more traditional type of course book, but, as excellent sources of creative writing, they have a place in the English department.

Keeping in mind the necessity for economy, I would suggest that the greatest benefit would be derived from the course if one set of each stage was made available to the department and could be "booked" by teachers for class use.

ELMA M. WILSON,
Garrion Academy.

Reluctant Readers

Spirals
Anita Jackson
Hutchinson in association with I.L.E.A.
A Game of Life or Death
The Austin Seven
The Actor
Dreams
The Ear
Bennet Manor
Each 30p.

Getaway Books
Nelson.
The Long Road Home
Joan Tate. 78 pages, 35p.
Stage to Nowhere
William Hirst. 96 pages, 35p.
Little Cayuse
Eugenie L. Myles. 96 pages, 35p.
Diamonds High
Roy Bebbington, 92 pages, 35p.

Anchor Books
Cassell.
Set 1, per set £2·00.
Attack in Dark Lane
G. R. Crosher, 64 pages, 55p.
Strangers in the Village
G. R. Crosher, 64 pages, 55p.
Runaway into Danger
G. R. Crosher, 64 pages, 55p.
No Sun at Sunnyside
G. R. Crosher, 63 pages, 55p.

Set 2, per set £2·00.
Polly and the Barrow Boy
Joan Tate. 56 pages, 55p.
Crow and the Brown Boy
Joan Tate. 55 pages, 55p.
When the Song was over
Anna Higgins, 64 pages, 55p.
Dangerous Thieves.
V. B. Chhiba. 64 pages, 55p.

As teachers of poor readers, what do we look for in a reading book? First of all, I think, it must look right inside and out. Great slabs of print daunt the reluctant reader, but no one wants to be seen reading *Andy Pandy*-type books with twenty words to the page. The only other requirements are the appropriate blend of interest and reading levels and, of course, a passable prose style. Not easy, but Hutchinson have brought it off with their *Spirals*.

Although slim, average 40 pages, they do not look like remedial readers. There are no pictures, and no one would be ashamed to be seen reading one. They need a reading age of around eight but they could be read and enjoyed by anyone. They all have a supernatural theme and if you have ever watched the first few minutes of a Hammer Production with your hand on the "off" switch and stayed on to see every predictable trick, you will have a fair idea of the level of their appeal and of their sophistication. I tried them on a Second Year remedial class, some poor-to-average Third Year girls and an adult learner. They all wanted more. By the way, my mother-in-law enjoyed them too, so that should clinch it!

The Nelson *Getaway* books are very good of their kind, too. Aimed at competent but reluctant, rather than learner, readers they would not look out of place on a railway station book-stall. Again no pictures with the text, and a clear type-face, nice line-spacing and sensibly short paragraphs give the pages an inviting appearance. *The Long Road Home* is about a young lad who leaves home and finds himself involved with a group of hippie-type-do-gooders who run an unofficial soup-kitchen/doss-house for derelicts and social misfits. *Stage to Nowhere* and *Little Cayuse* are Westerns with adolescent heroes who, like the hero in *The Long Road Home*, prove, after a set of testing adventures that they are made of the right kind of stuff. *Diamonds High* has a list of sure-fire ingredients. It has a private eye hero who has just engaged an assistant. She is beautiful, blonde and resourceful. Together they track down the diamond smugglers, following the trail in and out of Boeing 747s, fast cars and Hilton Hotels. What more could a poor-to-average Third or Fourth Year want from a class reader?

Cassell's *Anchor Series* would suit the 15-year-old reading at about the 8:0 mark. My own experience with their now-familiar format of text chopped up into short widely-spaced lines and pictures (black-and-white and not very good) on almost every other page, is that they do not go down very well with the pupils. The books do not quite meet my first requirement of looking right. The covers are alright but, unlike the other series reviewed here, you might be a little ashamed of being caught reading them. *Strangers in the Village* is quite a readable tale about a young woman who has a row with her husband and takes the baby and clears out. The heroes, two boys and a girl, become involved and all ends happily. Crosher's other three titles are less successful. They suffer, as does much of today's junior fiction, from the "Timothy Winters" syndrome. It is all social workers, probation officers, high-rise flats, derelict slums, poor old ladies, rows at home, etc. etc. Even if this is life as our children know it, and I accept that this is the case with many of them, do we have to make the poor devils read stories about battered wives and battered children acting out their lives in rat-infested, boarded-up hovels? There must be a better way of bridging the culture gap. *Polly and the Barrow Boy* and *When the Song was over*, which both deal with boy-meets-girl situations, and *Crow and the Brown Boy*, which is about a three-way relationship between a white boy, a West Indian boy and a crow, are much more appealing. I cannot find words to describe *Dangerous Thieves* by V. B. Chhiba. It is enough to shake one's faith in a normally responsible publisher of remedial books.

DAVID HIRD,
Inverurie Academy.

The Carnferry Gang
Alan Jamieson. Arnold, 123 pages, £1·25.
The Motivation Reader
J. F. Stevens. Methuen, each 32 pages, each £1·50.
Water Skiing
Trail Bike Action
Hang Gliding
Sailing Skiffs

The Carnferry Gang is intended for the 12-13 age group and is presented in an attractive soft back, illustrated with pen sketches on the cover and in each chapter. The book comprises fifteen stories depicting episodes in the experiences of three boys and two girls. Set in a Scottish industrial town with the countryside nearby, the group becomes involved in contemporary situations such as stealing, illness, camping, vandalism, rescue, sometimes bringing them into conflict with authority, with gangs and with themselves.

SRA offers a series of Short Courses in

Composition
Spelling and Vocabulary
Reading Comprehension
from S1 to S6

Recent Publications

Researchlab
to develop reference skills

NewsLab I & II
to encourage wider reading of newspapers and magazines

If you wish to discuss the potential of SRA materials in your school please write or telephone:

J.B. Gray. Regional Manager,
2263, London Road,
Mount Vernon, Glasgow, E2.
Tel: 041 778 4585

J.H. Andrews. Staff Associate,
23, Hunterhill Road,
Paisley, Renfrewshire.
Tel: 041 889 4407

SRA

SRA Limited,
Newtown Road,
Henley on Thames, Oxon.
Tel: Henley 5959

These stories are entertainingly written and the characters are well-drawn, within the limits of the vocabulary used. One such story involved Fiona who, after some artful persuasion, managed to get her parents to agree to her going on a school outing to study "marine life." The pupils had been reminded of the tasks they had been given to do for the "field-work" and on arrival ". . .thirty-odd pupils burst out of the bus like gas escaping from a ginger beer bottle." When Fiona and her friend Alison found themselves on the beach they soon became less enthusiastic about their fieldwork" and the invitation to swim was more than Fiona could refuse. A strong swimmer, but too late she finds herself carried away from the beach by currents. Eventually she is rescued by some fishermen but by the time she gets back to the beach she discovers the bus has gone.

Alison, however, is still there not so much out of loyalty, Fiona was to discover, but because she had also missed the bus.

The bus returns; the driver grumbles about kids and teachers; the teachers become tight-lipped and furious. The two girls, with their jars empty and their question-sheets uncompleted, slowly make their way into the bus looking as if they did not have a care in the world.

"'Is it half-past four then?' Alison asked, innocently. 'You see Miss, we don't have a watch and there are no clocks on the beach'."

At the end of each story there are ideas and suggestions for pupils' work. Under the heading "Questions for Discussion" there are, on average, ten questions on issues raised in the episode. Writing assignments are suggested such as answering questions about the story, describing what will happen next, giving factual reports; also writing a poem or story inspired by the chapter, and so on. Drama ideas are suggested also.

I think this book would be stimulating and interesting to slow learners in second and third year secondary and well worth having.

The Motivation Readers set out to appeal to the sense of adventure and action in boys and girls and consist of factual introductions to some lesser-known sports.

These books are excellently presented with stiff covers and a half-page colour photo on each page. Each illustration is referred to in the text below it, which consists of no more than fifty words. There are about thirty pages in each book. The material has an age interest of fourteen years and beyond but a reading age of about nine.

Water Skiing starts by describing the launching of a family inboard motor boat and goes on to describe skis, wet suits, the starting of a run, etc. Different boats are discussed briefly and various trick-skiing, barefoot skiing and even a dog on skis is commented upon.

Trail Bike Action deals with the elementary features of a trail bike; the different types, the importance of maintenance, etc. Most of the book is taken up with the hazards encountered on trials and emphasises the skills that are called for.

Hang Gliding is a lesser-known sport but is superbly illustrated in this book. The reader is taken through the procedures and preparation before and during launching; the conditions required with respect to wind and height; different methods of flying; landing techniques and hazards to be avoided.

Sailing Skiffs—once again well illustrated pictures depicting some particular preparation or activity that takes place before and during races. "Handicap" and "Scratch" ways of starting a race are explained; sailing into the wind, "tacking," trapeze and harness wires and several other technical points are mentioned.

Altogether I feel that this series must succeed in its appeal to the spirit of adventure in young people and represents a valuable addition to a "slower learner" library.

RAYMOND OVER,
Carnoustie High School.

Primary

Beginning Write Away
Robert J. Hoare. Longman, 48 pages, 50p.

All Round English with Work-books
Ronald Ridout *and* Michael Holt. Longman, 64 pages, 90p.

Skills in English
Kenneth Thompson. Cassell. Book 1, 42 pages, 65p. Book 2, 42 pages 65p. Book 3, 58 pages, 85p. Book 4, 60 pages, 85p.

Three language development series, all different but all with something in common. First the differences:

Beginning Write Away is the introductory stage to *Write Away* by the same author. It presents a number of topics like holidays, the family, TV, fantasy, which, the publishers say, awaken children to the joy of creative writing.

Graphically, the series is not entirely a success and despite a claim to high-quality illustration the pictures are in many cases barely satisfactory.

The content features the usual cliché situations like surprise meetings with creatures from other planets (this would appear to be mandatory now); horrid spiders and so on.

Some of the units invite the children to illustrate their story but no real help or advice is given.

All Round English is, according to the publishers, "a galaxy of colourful language work implementing a very thorough approach that is traditional yet different." Each double page spread presents what is intended to be a week's work covering items such as sentence construction, punctuation, comprehension and so on. There are associated work-books which concentrate on vocabulary and spelling and the series is meant to be used in conjunction with other books which are devoted to creative writing. At any rate, this is how the publisher sees the material.

The graphic presentation of the book is undeniably colourful, but in a crude way and the general impression is somewhat untidy and unpleasant. Clutter rather than galaxy springs to mind. The content itself is the usual mixture of exercises which test rather than teach and certainly are unlikely to inspire an enduring interest in language. One, on the Alphabet, asks the children to complete 26 pairs of sentences precisely emulating this model.

My name is Angela and my husband's name is Andrew. We come from Acton and we sell apples.

The authors thoughtfully provide a list of names, places and products which rather diminishes the opportunity for initiative on the childrens' part.

There are four books in the *Skills in English* series

which provide (according to the publisher) a language course for first to middle schools. Each book comprises a sequence of short chapters which is intended to form the basis of a year's work. The aim is to improve the basic structure of children's writing. (Apparently, this includes even hand-writing. The first three chapters of Book One are devoted to letter formation).

Once again the graphic presentation leaves something to be desired and though not by any means as untidy as *All Round Engish*, the books are not visually satisfying. They have that particular quality which makes a child's heart sink a little. Mr Thompson maintains the sinking feeling with exercises like the one entitled "From the Future to the Past" which is illustrated with a skyline of a futuristic city and invites the children to imagine what school will be like in the year 3000. It promises well, but a few lines later, it turns out to be an exercise in tenses —future, present and past.

What we have, then, are three sets of books—one of which provides topics for creative writing with allied art work; another which is a comprehensive English course with associated work books; and, finally, a four-year course aimed at the improvement of the basic structures in children's writing. Each series has its own characteristics and differs quite clearly from the others. More important, however, is the way in which the series are similar. All three have in common the fact that they pay little or no attention to modern thinking.

Children develop language by talking and must be engaged from an early stage in purposeful conversation. They come to school already possessing a great deal more in the way of language potential than they are normally required to use. This applies even to the disadvantaged or deprived children. A language course must therefore set up situations which generate those kinds of conversation which require children to exercise a greater range of language structures. For example, in *Skills in English*, Book One, the author apologises for asking the children to make a box to contain their word-bank. He feels this is handwork rather than language. It is an unhappy distinction, for in this very situation lies a basis for purposeful conversation. Children who perhaps discover a better way to make part of the box may then wish to describe this to other group members or to the teacher. They may even wish to speculate on other aspects of their box-making if sensitively encouraged by the teacher. The structures required for this kind of conversation are already possessed by the children but are rarely exercised in the playground or in day-to-day adult/child intercourse.

Children write best when they *want* to write and therefore a language course must include motivation, and this is what *Beginning Write Away* aims to provide. Mr Hoare states that in order to enjoy writing, all you need is something interesting to write about. Unfortunately, this is only half of the story. In order to write well, children have to know what they are talking about and in recognising this, *Beginning Write Away* offers, for example, a two-page spread providing some information, pictorially and in words, about cave people. It then invites the child to be a cave dweller and write a story. Such an approach is irrelevant because it is too simple. If children are to write about cave people then they must be personally involved, albeit imaginatively. Let them create their own cave people. Perhaps a frieze could depict a landscape where primitive survival is possible. Let them decide for themselves where to find food and shelter, how to make tools and weapons.

Help them to relate to their imaginary situations by finding points common to their own experience and that of their cave dwellers. For example, the children will have come upon animal tracks in the snow or in the sand just as the primitive hunter will find a trail to follow. Use passages of poetry and prose to intensify the children's awareness of their own experiences and their relationship to those of their imaginary community. When all this is done the children will be deeply involved in a situation and will have thought through its problems—problems which will have become their own. What they have thought through they will surely understand and be able to state coherently.

Language has a lot to do with thinking. The better the thinking, the better the language. It makes sense, then, to expect language programmes to promote thinking situations. Language develops through talk and therefore it is reasonable to look for conversational opportunities in a language development series. It is part of the function of teaching to enable children to attain increasing competence and therefore the language course must include enablement devices. In 1976 the least one should expect to find in new publications is clear evidence of this modern thinking.

Beginning Write Away offers motivation but no enablement. *All Round Enelish* tinkers away with the various superficial conventions of English in a manner which has been shown to do very little indeed for the development of children's language. *Skills in English* ranges widely from handwriting to the use of tape-recorders but, despite stated claims, does nothing to improve the basic structures of children's language.

It is not possible to recommend any of these series for use in today's primary schools. Our children have a right to expect, and usually get, a good deal better, though perhaps it should be said that much of the better material is provided by individual teachers and is only rarely available in published form.

BILL MOFFAT,
Thorn Primary School, Johnstone.

A Likely Story
Pleasure in Reading. Edited by Alan M. Lynskey. Longman, 122 pages, 85p.

Orbit Series
Holmes McDougall.

Mindar of Brannin
Books 1-3. Margaret Lennox Salter. Each 32 pages.

The Adventures of Magnus
Books 1-3. Margaret Lennox Salter. Each 32 pages.

Living on the Earth—Man
Books 1-3. Margaret Lennox Salter. Each 32 pages.

Living on the Earth—Animals
Books 1-3. J. T. Francis. Each 32 pages.

Teachers of P4 and P5 classes have in the past often envied the wider range of reading materials available to their colleagues teaching older classes in the school. Now Holmes McDougall have gone some way towards meeting the undoubted need for supplementary reading material for this 7-9-year-old age group with the publication of the *Orbit extension readers* series.

Designed originally to provide follow-up material for the same publisher's *Link Up* infant readers, the 12 books in the *Orbit* series should prove equally useful with pupils brought up on other reading schemes. The books are platformed on two levels of difficulty with three fact and three fictional books at each level.

Of the non-fictional books, all of which come under the one heading of *Living on the Earth*, the easier three deal with animals, while the more difficult three progress on to looking at man and how he looks after the world in which he lives.

The easier three of the six story books all feature the Adventures of Magnus and each book contains two self-contained tales. Pupils can thus enjoy the satisfaction of finishing the story, while their interest is maintained and they are encouraged to read on, as the same boy hero is featured in each one.

Most interesting of all the *Orbit* books are perhaps the final three fiction books by Margaret Lennox Salter, in which she has created the mythical kingdom of Brannin. All six stories in them have a distinct pace and a number of truly cliff-hanging endings, which I feel should make them very good material for older remedial readers.

All the *Orbit* books have attractive full colour illustrations, well linked with the text, which appears on the same or the opposite page. A separate workbook will contain exercises linked to all twelve books, but I feel that some of the books, especially the Brannin three, could well be read simply for enjoyment.

Unlike most of the titles in the *Pleasure in Reading Series*, published by Longman, *A Likely Story* is not one story at all, but a whole selection of tales from which it is indeed likely that senior primary pupils of above-average ability will find much to enjoy.

With authors including Alan Garner, Ted Hughes and Phillippa Pearce, the standard of writing is high and the range of story wide, from the fantasy of William Trevor's "The Sunflowers in the Snow" to the everyday world of "Coming Home" by Keith Waterhouse.

Most of the book's fourteen stories are short stories and where extracts, such as "Tadpole Time" from Barry Hines' famous *Kestrel for a Knave* have been included, editor Alan M. Lynskey, Head Teacher of Greenbank School, Rochdale, has chosen well so that they can either be read happily on their own or serve as an introduction to the whole book.

A Likely Story is illustrated with black and white line drawings and it is interesting to note that it is printed in Hong Kong, which may account for the reasonable price for a hardback.

Other titles in the same series include: *The Magician's Nephew* by C. S. Lewis, *The Last of the Vikings* by Henry Treece, *A Dog So Small* by Phillippa Pearce, *Stig of the Dump* by Clive King, and *First Choice* which, like *A Likely Story*, is a collection of extracts and short stories.

WILLIAM F. HENDRIE,
Murrayfield Primary School, Blackburn.

Chambers Young Set Dictionaries 1-4

This set of four dictionaries, now appearing in limp covers, was originally published in hardback during the period from 1971-74.

It consists of a carefully-planned progression in dictionary training from a picture book starter to a first adult dictionary containing 15,000 references.

This series could not be described as a new concept in dictionary publication. The approach is traditional but in presentation and layout it compares very favourably with others of its type. A noteworthy feature is its adherence, as far as possible, to the natural expression of children.

Although essential to the completeness of the set, *Dictionary 1* seems the least effective of the series but could well be given a place, with other picture book material of a similar type, in the Infant Library. *Dictionaries 2* and *3* (nicely illustrated with good line drawings) have the quality and potential to carry through a sound programme of dictionary training for the 6-9 age group, where they could probably be used to greatest advantage in class sets.

The last of the series I would place in the top primary classrooms as part of a collection of varied dictionaries. It would seem more economical at this stage to provide a selection than to equip each child with a smaller and less adequate volume. *Dictionary 4* is commendable for elementary requirements and eminently suitable in its clarity of layout for less-able pupils. However, it clearly does not offer nearly enough references to satisfy the requirements of some senior primary pupils who are ready to use a more comprehensive reference work such as the *Twentieth Century Dictionary* by the same publishers.

ISOBEL STODDART,
Thorn Primary School, Johnstone.

Criticism for CSYS

A Preface to Hardy
Merryn Williams. Longman (Preface Books), 182 pages, hardback £3·00, paperback £2·00.

A Preface to Pope
I. R. F. Gordon. Longman (Preface Books), 196 pages, hardback £3·00, paperback £2·00.

An Introduction to Pope
Pat Rogers. Methuen (University Press), 182 pages, hardback £5·00, paperback £2·50.

In these days of desire for some return to the classics; in the C.S.Y.S. opportunities to concentrate upon authors as opposed to isolated texts; in the magnificent scope of the Dissertation; in the listing of Hardy as a Specified Author in the 1977 and 1978 C.S.Y.S. Literature lists; in the development in Paper II of the open question, providing possibilities for answers on Pope; and, most important of all, in the need to provide young questioning minds with writers of stature and relevance—these three books are very welcome.

The Preface books are written to the same tight formula referred to in John McPartlin's review of earlier Preface works, to Yeats and to Jane Austen, in *Teaching English*, Volume 9(1) October 1975. And similar judgments may be made of these new works, in all but one respect. There is the same helpful and attractive series of maps, photographs, diagrams, pictures, engravings, manuscripts—about twenty-eight

WHEATON STUDIES IN LITERATURE

General Editor: Thomas Crehan

Each book in this valuable new series opens with a long essay on the poet or poets to be studied, his writing, and the times and circumstances in which the poetry was produced. This is followed by a selection of poems which fully covers the areas commonly set at advanced level. Exhaustive notes, which assume no previous knowledge of the subject area, are supported also by synopses of the more difficult works and, where the material is available, the poet's own comments on his work. At the end of each book is a selection of critical opinion, from writing contemporary with the poems down to the criticism of today.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS
POETRY AND PROSE
Ed. Dr K. E. Smith **£1.20 net**

THE MARTIAL MUSE
SEVEN CENTURIES OF WAR POETRY
Ed. Alan Bold **£1.35 net**

THREE EARLY TUDOR POETS
SKELTON, WYATT AND SURREY
Ed. N. Bielby **£1.40 net**

WILLIAM BLAKE
SELECTED POETRY AND LETTERS
Ed. Dr A. S. Crehan **£1.40 net**

THE MINOR POEMS OF JOHN MILTON
Ed. T. Crehan **£1.20 net**

LITERATURE FOR LIFE SERIES

General Editor: Kenyon Calthrop

The first four of these new anthologies of short stories by contemporary writers have already become best-sellers since their publication in April. Alan Sillitoe and Bill Naughton have both made their own selections of the very best of their writing and added their own introductions to the anthologies. The late Mervyn Peake's novella *Boy in Darkness* is introduced by his wife Maeve Gilmore and John Foster introduces a selection of some of the most outstanding studies by H. E. Bates. Four writers, in four completely different styles, demonstrate their mastery of the art of short story writing. The latest addition to the series (November 1976) is *The Seeds of Time* by John Wyndham, with the author's own introduction.

DOWN TO THE BONE
Alan Sillitoe **80p**

THE POISON LADIES
H. E. Bates **90p**

BOY IN DARKNESS
Mervyn Peake **60p**

THE BEES HAVE STOPPED WORKING
Bill Naughton **80p**

THE SEEDS OF TIME
John Wyndham **£1.05**

DIMENSIONS

A provocative new series of thematic anthologies, published May 1976, which takes a close look at issues of immediate interest to young people and provides a wide range of material for classroom use.

ADOLESCENCE
Mike Samuda **70p**

BLACK AND WHITE
John L. Foster **75p**

LOVE AND MARRIAGE
Mike Samuda **70p**

SCHOOL
John L. Foster **70p**

WHEATON

HENNOCK ROAD, EXETER EX2 8RP

in each book. There are the same generous Reference Sections, comprising short Biographies, Gazetteers, Chronological Tables of the Main Events in the Author's Life and Times, guides to Further Reading; and in the Hardy Book, an Appendix on Serialization and its effects on Hardy's texts; in the Pope Book, a glossary of Technical Terms. Part One of each text is devoted in some detail to "The Writer in His Setting," comprising a wide range of influences. In Part Two, "The Critical Survey" is very well suited to Sixth-Year teaching in its attempts to introduce these young readers to the art of criticism by concentrating on samples of some of the crucial texts. In short, these Prefaces are very helpful works.

The one respect in which my evaluation differs from John McPartlin's is as a result of his comments:

> It is, however, the nature of this kind of background book which deserves serious questioning by a teacher of Sixth Year Studies English who wishes to stimulate students to a valid connection with, or even antipathy to, a writer. . . . They represent the unprovocative strain of not only literary criticism, but much of education, which may not allow our pupils the stance of reaction.

Such criticism, certainly as regards *A Preface to Hardy* and *A Preface to Pope*, attacks the authors for not doing what they deliberately set out to avoid: the books are intended only as clearing grounds to make easier that contact of teacher and pupil. Perhaps John McPartlin's cautionary note should be directed to teachers who fail to see the books' intended limits, and avoid becoming "provocative teachers . . . who will help to create such relationships." Ironically, in any case, such is the nature of the two writers prefaced, Hardy and Pope, that involuntarily any book about them would arouse reaction. And Merryn Williams clearly cannot contain herself within the editorial format and manages to have the General Editor, Maurice Hussey, in his Foreword write:

> this most readable, and unexpectedly positive study of Hardy's prose and verse. . . .
> Perhaps I am biased. I certainly take instant likings

to critics who can, as she does, begin her books with the words quoted from Thomas Hardy, writing about William Barnes:

> But criticism is so easy and art so hard; criticism so flimsy and the life seer's voice so lasting.

Pat Rogers' book, *An Introduction to Pope*, enforces a direct comparison with Gordon's *A Preface to Pope*, both being preparatory books, both acknowledging an indebtedness to Maynard Muck, "the greatest of living Popians," and both aimed at Sixth Year pupils and First Year College Students. This demand for a comparison is, too, made by the readers of this magazine who wish for a reviewer's opinion.

Professor Rogers' book is organised very differently from Assistant Professor Gordon's thus producing different requirements of his readers. Apart from Chapters 1 and 2, "The Writer and his Audience" and "The Politics of Style," respectively; and from Chapters 9 and 10, "A Poet's Prose" (I. R. F. Gordon's book does not offer the concentrated detail on this area of Pope's work) and "Pope and Age," respectively—apart from these, he has six chapters, the bulk of the book, combining criticism and background in the order established by "The Twickenham edition," *ed.* Butt, 1939-1969, "now in every respect standard." So readers able to cope are immediately given a bridgehead into the ultimate. And, of course, the book has no lack of challenging remarks. Indeed, I found my ire rising at some of the comments made *en passant* about other writers—for example, against Hopkins.

How, then, to decide between the two offerings? In my opinion, I. R. F. Gordons' *Preface* is more suited to starting Sixth Year pupils on a study of Pope; Pat Rogers' *Introduction* to starting First Year University pupils on a similar study. However, Pat Rogers' book is certainly of interest to teachers who, during the session, would like to catch the intoxication of a gifted Professor making Pope come alive in the confines of a short book, and thereby being recharged for that so-important dialogue with the pupils. The best of these would, properly taught, benefit from Rogers' book at the end of their Sixth.

So all three books have a part to play in Sixth Year work—and, fundamentally, I repeat, because they ably open up to us teachers and to the young, challenging minds in our care, writers who are "Life-Seers," two men who were steeped in the arts and who confronted their times against bitter difficulties, articulating their permanent truths. Who are we missing today?

PETER R. GIBSON,
Bankhead Academy.

Serious Play

Play
Edited by J. S. Bruner, A. Jolly *and* K. Sylva. Penguin Books, 1976, 716 pages, £2·75.

Play is a portly but portable reader that moves dauntingly over huge fields. Ethology, ontogeny and phylogeny appear through brief bursts of mathematical static. There is much on monkeys, and what Darwin began ethology has completed, and we can now regard our animal natures with equanimity. Monkeys at play, we're told, move with "a particular kind of open-mouthed gesture, a slack but exaggerated gait, and a marked 'galumphing'"—suggestive of scenes at any party.

The book dazzles with its variety. Cock-fighting in Bali, the effects of protein deficiency, country games in the 1880s, sit together happily as do Auden with Lorenz, Piaget with van Lawick-Goodall. Nothing is without some interest although some of the selections are peculiar: the Japanese studies of macaque monkeys have produced a lot more interesting results than the rather dry sample provided here—the story of how they learned to swim and began to colonise other islands is a perfect illustration of the constructive use of play.

In folk wisdom, work and play, like death and life, are usually divided against one another—the former, moral, brutish and protracted, the other, naughty, joyous and short. "Work consists of whatever a body

is *obliged* to do, and Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do"—or so Mark Twain felt. This book makes one realise that the quotation's Work and Play have to be transposed if sentiment is to fit facts, and that we might be happier anthropoids if there were no divisions at all.

Apart from encouraging cries of "Viva Lawrence!" and a more stoical attitude to unemployment, there isn't much in the book that is of direct concern to the English teacher, but to perceive its contents in terms of any one discipline is to restrict its effect. *Play* abounds in thought-provoking material for the teacher in general; Eric Erikson's concluding chapter on play and actuality, with its vision of war as ritual, suggests that Owen as much as Brooke might have been guilty of exaggerated gesture and inappropriate rhetoric, a view that could do no end of good—at the very least for S.C.E. markers.

For the teacher to harness the learning power of play is no easy task. Play is not Fun. The child's actions are subordinated to a meaning only revealed in the course of playing, the process of learning being involuntary yet self-directed, and the study and use of play is often a teasing out of such paradoxes. The classroom, though it mimics the process of playing, fails to use the play experience much beyond the middle primary school and a detailed look at this limitation might have been rewarding.

The acquisition of games with rules, Piaget says here, marks a compromise between self needs and social demands, and it is in this area that the book appears at its weakest. In failing to deal in detail with the relationship between child and adult forms of play and, indeed, the social, political and economic considerations with which we hedge them about, the book avoids an important commitment. Less stress on the behavioural sciences and their methodological purities and a more thorough-going journey afield—to Kafka, Heller or Albee, for example—would have extended its range most usefully. Western contemporary spectator sports such as non-nuclear war, football and pornography offer pleasures with considerable profits, but if the real play takes place only in the stands what has this done to our heads? If child play forms, adult play realises, and a study of both might well give some sort of answer to a few of our more pressing social dilemmas.

Really important books bring concerns that were on the edge of things into positions of central significance. This book, important though it is, does not manage that because play has always been thought of as crucial. What it did achieve for the present writer was a realisation that a large number of books on educational matters generally had suddenly developed nasty big holes—and that can be no bad thing.

ROBBIE ROBERTSON.
Moray House College of Education.

The Space Between Words

Cohesion in English
Halliday *and* Hasan. Longman. 374 pages. £5·00.

The names of the authors of this work must be familiar to many teachers of English: as a joint author of *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching* (Longman, 1964), Professor Halliday was a prime mover in drawing attention to the rôle of linguistics in education, a rôle to which his project on Linguistics and the Teaching of English, supported in turn by the Nuffield Foundation and the Schools' Council, gave some practical realisation through such schemes as *Language in Use* and *Breakthrough to Literacy*. Dr Hasan contributed a preliminary paper on the means of connection through and between utterances, christened by SALT as "devices of cohesion."

We are now presented with a thorough account of such devices in English, largely deriving from the work of the Nuffield/Schools' Council Project. It would be impracticable, as well as impertinent on my part, to undertake in these pages a critical review of this publication. I propose simply to characterise the sort of information the book provides.

Clearly what gives a text coherence is the way a language allows for connection between sentences: as the authors remark, devices of cohesion are essentially semantic in nature, though they may be realised in many cases in grammatical as well as lexical forms. The first part of the book discusses how to look at connections between sentences in text.

In general, the authors see *five* classes of cohesive devices: those operating by identity of reference, those operating by substitution, those operating by ellipsis (of items presupposed), those operating by conjunction (including various types of logical relationship) and those depending on lexical relationship including collocation.

No one, least of all the authors, would suppose that this description could be regarded at this stage as definitive. Even as it stands, there are certain qualifications to be borne in mind in applying it to texts. This is the subject of the final pages of the book, which first discusses the matter in fairly general terms and then offer some tentative demonstrations of the analysis of cohesion.

All experience of the application of linguistics to English teaching has induced a somewhat pessimistic view of its practical effects. Nevertheless, its tendency has undoubtedly been healthy on the whole. Perhaps the dramatic advances in grammatical description typical of the late fifties and the sixties have been in an area of limited interest especially to the mother-tongue teacher, though this is hardly so true of "case grammar" or Halliday's own studies in transitivity and theme. The area of linguistic description with which this book deals is, however, of obvious importance to the teacher of composition or of close literary study. As usual, the linguist seeks to give precise definitions of what the user of English instinctively knows. What is said in this book will be difficult to assimilate, but I have no doubt that we have here a seminal text for teachers of English language.

T. M. BROWN.
Moray House College of Education.

Advanced Conversational English
David Crystal *and* Derek Davy. Longman. 132 pages. £2·25.

When a learner has mastered the structural patterns of English and apparently has a good command of the language how is it that he can still be so ill at

ease in a normal conversational situation? It may well be, as the authors of this handbook suggest, that he has not appreciated that fluent speech is not necessarily the consequence of increasing the quantity and speed of production of structures already learned: knowing what can be left out of a sentence or taken for granted in a dialogue is often of as great importance. Having learned of the existence of the major types of tone-unit in English, the student must now understand how to put them together into acceptable sequences in order to convey the right degree of rapport in a relaxed and friendly conversation.

Introductory courses do not teach a student that participation in a conversation demands continual alertness. One cannot passively listen as normal conversation requires the person who is not doing the talking to keep up a flow of encouraging sounds—but not too many—in order to convey attention and understanding. A great deal more than intuition is required as one must recognise by a change in tone or a silence where offence has been given, know when to laugh and when not to laugh. Being in conversational tune is a tricky business.

The authors present the advanced learner with a series of fifteen extracts in which there is interplay of speakers who are characterised by their age, provenance, occupation and interests in an introductory note. The student is given some indication of the tensions or attitudes which are likely to emerge. The text of each extract is marked with the main prosodic features used by the speakers and followed by a commentary which deals with points of pronunciation, syntax, lexis and usage. There is an accompanying tape which plays a vital part in the study of each piece.

The subject matter of the extracts ranges from football to holidays and children. Most of the conversations are relaxed, after-dinner talk, and several of the speakers appear in more than one extract. The main drawback is that they are all educated middle-class people, despite a variety of accent, and for this reason the learner is eavesdropping on a rather restricted audience. One would have welcomed a wider sample of the population if the learner is to be introduced adequately to the shifts and variations in English conversation. But this is a minor cavil: this book breaks new ground and is a systematic attempt to analyse what many people would maintain defied adequate description. It will surprise and interest many native speakers and conversers.

PAULINE BROWN,
Moray House College of Education.

CHAMBERS DICTIONARIES

a complete range

Young Set Dictionaries –
Dictionary One 45p
Dictionary Two 55p
Dictionary Three 90p
Dictionary Four £1.20
School Dictionary 60p
Essential Dictionary £1.40
Students' Dictionary £1.75
Twentieth Century Dictionary
(not available on inspection)
£5.50 net

ANCHOR —BOOKS—

A NEW SERIES

Thematic anthologies for children from 11 — 14. A selection of imaginative texts and illustrations carefully chosen to provide a basis from which one can develop individual and group work, comment and discussion.

Pupils' Anthologies 96 pages, Limp £1.00

The Sea
Men and Animals

Teachers' Book 48 pages, Limp £1.25

Further details and inspection copies from

CHAMBERS
11 Thistle Street Edinburgh EH2 1DG.